ALCHEMY AND ITS MUTE BOOK

INNER GARDEN PRESS

L008

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[Mutus Liber]

Introduction and comments by:

Eugène Canseliet F.C.H.

Disciple of Fulcanelli

Inner Garden Press

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Original French Edition

L’Alchimie et son Livre Muet
[Mutus liber]

Réimpression première et intégrale
de l’édition originale de La Rochelle 1677

Introduction et commentaires par Eugène Canseliet F.C.H.
disciple de Fulcanelli

à Paris
chez Jean-Jacques Pauvert
1967

EDITOR'S PREFACE

In 2010 the Inner Garden Press presented an English translation of Magophon's erudite commentary to the *Mutus Liber*. This year, 2015, after having celebrated our first *lustrum*, we are proud to present another commentary to the *Mutus*, one that followed half a century after that of Magophon's.

This commentary was written by Eugène Canseliet and bears the title *Alchemy and its Mute Book*. It concerns an exegesis that is extraordinary in terms of both its content and its style. Canseliet's diction is unique and his writing style could be described as a sophisticated form of *logographic acupuncture*. He delicately examines one location, then carefully touches upon another and before the point has quite sunk in, he has already switched to a different area to carefully place another illustrative needle. Canseliet writes: 'It is a fact that it was the custom, if not the rule, among ancient authors to write their treatises in such a way that all parts of teaching were scattered and jumbled around, like the disconnected pieces of a puzzle that one must apply oneself to in order to reunite them.' As the reader will discover, Canseliet faithfully continues this tradition and delivers his pinpricks in an almost random manner.

At first this may lead the reader to a state of bewilderment about the gist of the story and the overarching aim of Canseliet's delicate observations on the imagery. Slowly but surely though, the treatment starts to have its effect. Gradually the meaning of alchemy's web of images and symbols starts to seep out of the woodwork and the more experienced student of alchemy will appreciate the sincerity with which Canseliet wrote.

Whereas the existence of this language of images may have seemed unlikely at first, and their meanings far-fetched, this book slowly warms the reader up to this evolved and noble language that was spoken by so many respected authors. And as one warms up to the idea of this language of images, the reality of a most outrageous concept — the existence of the *Philosopher's Stone*, the essential subject

of the *Mutus Liber* — may gradually appear less of a vain chimera.

In this first quarter of the 21st century we find ourselves at a point in time where information is available instantly, explicitly and profusely and where the exclusion of words goes no further than the placement of an 'X' in X-factor, an 'E' in a digital facility or an 'I' in something marketed as an indispensable personal app that provides the user with immediate information and all manner of facilities. Within the current constellation of immediate gratification, a book such as the *Mutus* would be quickly cast aside as impenetrable by any sane-minded person had it not been for the existence of a number of guiding lights on the path who, speaking to us from a bygone age, have taken the time and trouble to carefully study and illuminate this work. These guides are, first and foremost, the previously mentioned Magaphon (Pierre Dujols, to whom we owe the first published commentary on the *Mutus Liber*) as well as to the author of this present book, Eugène Canseliet.

In addition to the work from Canseliet two other commentaries on the Mutus appeared in the second half of the 20th century, one by the hand of Serge Hutin and another by Jean Laplace. The work of Canseliet, however, stands head and shoulders above the other two. The work of Hutin relies all too heavily on quotations from Magophon's foundational work and that of Laplace in turn relies on the work of Canseliet. The reader therefore now has in his or her hands the most profound commentary on the *Mutus Liber*; a commentary of a book that is considered one of the finest examples in the tradition of the wordless book and which lends itself to multiple layers of analysis that go well beyond propositional knowledge.

Could it be that in the footsteps of the guides mentioned above that there yet exists a rare breed of practitioners, and an even rarer class of masters, who still transmit their intimate knowledge of the *Mutus Liber*? A knowledge which goes beyond even that which is found in this book, unravelling the innermost secrets of the deepest layers of information that make up the very weft of this book? Of which the short puzzle that Canseliet attempted to solve for us — that of *Oculatus Abis* being an anagram of *Jacob Sulat* — is merely a postlude?

Could that be the reason why Canseliet refers to this treatise as an introduction, in other words something that is far from a comprehensive discourse on the *Mutus*? It is best not to venture into subjects that cannot be substantiated, especially not when it concerns such a profound matter as the making of the Philosopher's Stone.

Did *The Mute Book* help Canseliet to achieve this ultimate stage of success? Did he complete the *Opus Major* that results in the Philosopher's Stone? This is another matter that can neither be confirmed nor denied as it remains uncertain whether Canseliet completed the Great Work in the physical realm. There is no known evidence or reason to assume that he was able to fulfil this lifelong passion. Allegedly Canseliet ran into insurmountable difficulties in the final chapter of the work and eventually even became doubtful as to whether he had correctly interpreted the hints given by his master as to the *Prima Materia* of the work. On the other hand, it is said that Eugène Canseliet did perform a successful transmutation. In a laboratory of the gas works of Sarcelles at the Georgi Company and in the presence of Julien Champagne and Gaston Sauvage, Canseliet reportedly transmuted 100 grams of lead into gold. As the story goes, however, the projection powder that was used for this transmutation was not of Canseliet's own making but had been given to him by his teacher. This teacher was the elusive immortal master Fulcanelli who, in his late seventies, had accepted the young Canseliet as his student. In the preface to the book *Voyages in Kaleidoscope*, one can find a number of hints about the possible real life person behind the pseudonym of Fulcanelli and those who wished to pose as the mysterious Alchemist. Canseliet's respect for his master shows throughout his works. Allegedly there was a period in which Canseliet was not the only student of Fulcanelli, even though he was most likely the first and certainly the most dedicated student. Fulcanelli is said to have accepted the sons of Ferdinand de Lesseps as students around 1921 and two more students in the following year, namely Jules Boucher and Gaston Sauvage. Canseliet, however, was the only student who faithfully used the honorary title of F.C.H. behind his name. This abbreviation of *Frère Chevalier d'Héliopolis* concerns the

distinctive title of the knightly order of the Fraternity of Heliopolis, a group that centred around Fulcanelli.

Heliopolis in this context is not to be mistaken for a designation of the ancient city in Egypt or the former name of Baalbek in Lebanon. It is an allusion to the metaphorical *City of the Sun*, a Rosicrucian designation of the sacred and central abode of initiates. The occidental vibe that the name evokes nevertheless points to Egypt and the Middle East as the cradle of the Western Alchemical Tradition. The addition of *Chevalier* or Knight is illustrative of an important route and milieu via which these teachings found their way into Western alchemy. Canseliet was born on 18 December 1899 and was introduced to the City of the Sun at the young age of 16. This followed directly after what must have been a rather dark spell in his life. As a boy of only 15, he had been called to serve as a soldier in the First World War. It is recorded that 1915 was the year in which Canseliet was recruited to serve in the 21st Artillery Battalion as a draftsman. His assignment at the front came to a premature end a mere two months after entering service when Canseliet was diagnosed with 'pulmonary lesions and gastro-intestinal problems'. He was re-stationed to a communication centre away from the war-front and assigned as *homme de lettres*. This was certainly more congruent with the talents and affinities of Canseliet and it might have contributed to his enduring avocation in that area.

Canseliet was to embark upon a lifetime of writing. The combined number of articles and books written by Canseliet, practically all on the subject of alchemy and hermeticisim, is impressive. In that light, one could convincingly state that in his later life Canseliet continued to live up to the title of a *man of letters* that he had received so early in his life. Canseliet's skill with the pen would take on an exceptional level of refinement, a quality and finesse that turned out to be a perfect match for his scribings about his endeavours in the Royal Art.

Returning to our metaphor of the practice of *acupuncture with words*, the reader will discover in the course of this book that Canseliet dexterously uses his skill in this area to take a few good accurately placed jabs at contemporaries and would-be alchemists. He does so in

a cautious manner that only barely camouflages the pinch. Canseliet often seems to have a point which makes the careful delivery of the pinprick quite entertaining. Take for example this quote:

'It completely escapes us as to why first Émile Nourry and then later Paul Derain refer to Jean-Jacques Manget's copy rather than to the original since we will not insult them by assuming that they never had the chance to read it.'

Obviously, Émile Nourry and Paul Derain would have mentioned the original of the *Mutus Liber* from Altus, *had they known about it*, when they commented on Manget's version. So even though Canseliet starts off by saying that the reason escapes him, the final part of his remark directs the reader towards the most likely rationale. The insult is thus backhandedly underlined, allowing the reader to draw their own conclusions.

Unfortunately though, at times the curly strokes of Canseliet's pen spin off to form such complex calligraphical digressions that the actual point tends to disappear between the letters. This circumspect way of bringing across the message often requires the reader to unwrap it, in a sense, from the rather wordy package within which it has been delivered. It does not always make for an easy read. However, when given enough time for the message to sink in and the mind to digest it, the patience and persistence of the reader will be rewarded.

One thing is certain: notwithstanding Canseliet's flowery language and involved style, the lettered form in which he brings across his message is still far more easily digestible in this day and age than the cryptographic 'unlettered' puzzle of imagery that is the subject of his commentary — the *Mutus Liber* itself. He therefore provides a valuable point of entrance to the enigmatic book and its elusive *green language*.

The green language is the initiate's language of words and images that was applied to reveal meaningful associations among ideas and to allow for multiple layers of interpretation. To further increase the accessibility of the annotations with this language of images, we have carefully tried to disentangle some of Canseliet's tortuous sentences in the process of translating his writings to English. Without losing sight of the appropriate contextual relevance of sentences within sentences,

we are confident that we have managed to arrive at an accurate yet more piecemeal delivery of his sagacity.

As such, we hope this particular translation of Canseliet's annotations will provide a more straightforward way through the portal that leads into the realm of symbolic language and into the *Garden of the Philosophers* — a realm to which Altus has left prosperity a most *visual key*. We enjoy the idea that this might set the reader on the track of a greater understanding of the green language and of the wisdom contained in this unique, almost legendary alchemical tract: the *Mutus Liber*.

December 2015

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Br. E.

EPIGRAPH

Philosophers have expressed themselves most freely and most clearly by use of symbols and enigmatic figures, as if through a silent language rather than by the use of words. Examples of this are Senior's *Tabula* [*Chemica*], the allegorical paintings of the *The Rosary* [*of the Philosophers*], *The Book of Abraham the Jew* from Flamel as well as Flamel's [*Hieroglyphic*] *Figures*. A more recent example would be the remarkable emblems of the learned Michael Maier. (*The Secret Work of the Hermetic Philosophy*. Canon XII.)

Typis & figuris ænigmaticis, muto quasi sermone liberiùs & significantiùs exprimunt se philosophi, quàm verbis; exemplo sint tabula Senioris, Rozarii picturæ allegoric, Abrahamæ Iudæi apud Flamellum, tum etiam ipsius Flamelli schemata: ex recentioribus insignia doctissimi M. Maieri emblemata. (Arcanum hermeticæ Philosophiæ Opus. Canon XII.)

INTRODUCTION

MUTUS LIBER ... *The Mute Book!* Thus reads the short and unusual title of a treatise on alchemy, one that consists only of images. It is presented in this book to satisfy the curiosity, if not the interest, of all its admirers. The above mentioned initial two words of the first plate are followed by an explanation which, after translation, reveals the promise of a fruitful harvest to be reaped:

> '... in which, however, the entire Hermetic Philosophy is represented in hieroglyphic figures, consecrated to our merciful God, thrice blessed and thrice great, and dedicated to the solitary sons of the art, by the author that goes by the name of Altus.'

The qabalistic double meaning of the Latin words in this explanation does not escape us. It contains a play on words between the plural dative *solus* and the singular genitive of *sol*. The similar spelling of these words implies a double meaning of *dedicated to the sons of the art and of the sun* as well as *dedicated to the solitary sons of the art:* solisque filiis artis dedicatus.

The rest of the work contains only a few additional words, namely on the last and second to last page. We are referring here to the plates numbered fourteen and fifteen. The sentence composed of Latin words that is found on plate fourteen presents a rather amusing piece of advice for a book that requires little effort in the way of an ordinary reading:

ORA, LEGE, LEGE, LEGE,
RELEGE, LABORA ET INVENIES.

Pray, read, read, read,
reread, work and you will discover.

When this charitable, encouraging and valuable piece of advice is abided by with humility and patience, it provides the key that opens the great Garden of the Philosophers and provides access to their ladder of ascension. This ladder of ascension leads into the unknown world of the universal subconscious. Alchemy pertains specifically to the state of consciousness or natural grace which, among the wise, finds a balance in the fertile duality between Love and Knowledge and that generates a continuous desire for improvement. The ancient discipline therefore consists of unceasingly separating that which is false from all conceptions and that which is impure from all matter. As a result, both conceptions and matter will slowly progress towards a higher state of purity and the sublime. This is exactly what Martinus Rulandus refers to in his *Lexicon Alchemiae* where he states: 'Alchimia est separatio impuri a substantia puriore.'

Following in our Master's footsteps we studied the *scala philosophorum* on the middle pillar of the central porch of the Notre-Dame in Paris. This pillar depicts a woman, seated within a circular medallion, who passes a ladder between her legs and receives it at her chest. She is portrayed as a majestic being, covered by a wide mantle and with her head touching the waves of the sky. She holds the sceptre of power against her left shoulder and carries two books in her right arm. These books symbolize the mineral subject which is closed at first, and then opens later.

Nothing could more aptly describe the paramount importance of this bas-relief than the concluding remarks about this woman as transmitted by the Adept Fulcanelli in the following brief paragraph:

> 'That is the title of the philosophical chapter of this *Mutus Liber*, the gothic cathedral; the frontispiece of this occult Bible, with its massive pages of stone; the imprint, the seal of the secular Great Work on the face of the Christian Great Work. It could not be better situated than on the very threshold of the main entrance.'[1]

This sculpture is attributed to Geoffroy Dechaume. It replaces the

medieval image that placed alchemy, seated in a similar way but viewed in profile, under a hexagram. The hexagram was formed by two equilateral triangles superimposed one upon the other with one triangle pointing up and the other pointing down. This was considered to be a graphic representation of the Philosopher's Stone. As is commonly known, the base triangle was a symbol of fire which, towards its apex, merges with the triangle that symbolizes water.

During the restoration, Viollet-le-Duc provided his sculptor with a design that he had taken from the Laon Cathedral, namely that of the ancient queen doted with the same attributes of the sceptre, the ladder, and most notably, the books that stress the imperative of extreme tenacity as implored by Altus' apophthegm. At the Notre-Dame of Laon, one can still see the high altar to the left of the great rose in front of the window at the back of a very large bay that lies recessed within the thick wall. This admirable archivolt is composed of three bands of ornamental sculptings whose subjects are made to stand out by use of *ronde bosse*. All of them are from the 13th century and every one of them are very well-preserved since due to their lofty placement they managed to escape the frenzy of the Revolution. For the same reason the use of binoculars is required to be able to see that, located in the middle carving, it is alchemy which takes the position at the head of the *liberal arts* that are represented there.

It is worth noting that Viollet-le-Duc had chosen a motif that was in such perfect harmony with that of the Middle Ages that Germain Soufflot did not dare to remove it like he did with the mullion between the two openings of the Portal of the Last Judgement. The attentive reader will understand that the renowned architect of the Second Empire was, at the very least, touched by the spirit of the *Compagnons*[2]. This affinity is underlined by the inscription that was included on the frame of the spire, one hundred and eight years ago, at the intersection of the nave and the transept of Notre-Dame of Paris.

This dedication was discovered by Raoul Vergez, author of *Béarnais l'Ami du Tour de France* who, accompanied by two apprentice carpenters, sought it out and found it after an enthralling climb. He

briefly relates of his journey and discovery in edition nº 209 of *Atlantis*, an edition dedicated to the cathedral. We are indebted to him for having shared the results of his exploration:

> 'To the glory of the great architect of the universe, this spire was built in the year 1858. M. Viollet-le-Duc, architect of the cathedral, Ballu, carpenter-contractor, Georges of Angevin, son of genius, leader of his carpenter apprentices in the work of freedom. AND THE FLAMING STAR.'

✳

Now let us examine the exhorting declaration offered on the last page of our *Mute Book*, written twice across a banner in a most persuasive way. Its parting wisdom would appear to contain bitter irony and a dark sense of humour, if it would not entirely affirm the didactic power, at the same time vast and generous, that this book offers under the unrivalled imperious semblance of impenetrability:

OCULATUS ABIS!

Thou departest seeing.

From Latin to French, it becomes apparent that the above phrase of parting wisdom is an anagram of *Jacobus Sulat*. *Sulat* was the beneficiary of the concession accorded by Louis XIV for the first edition 'in S. Germain on the twenty-third day of November of the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred seventy-six.' The reader will find this piece *in fine*, as this was the original location where it was included in the printed work. The reader would do well to pause and consider this particularity: the royal guaranty was not written in Latin, unlike the some forty words of the book itself. At the time the use of Latin was customary, as the vernacular language had no place in any work of scholarly nature, regardless the circumstances. The concession was normally announced as — cum Privilegio Regis — *with the Authorisation of the King*, but was often shortened to its *essentials* —

summa Privilegii.

The main point of interest in this context is to be found in the initial sentence of the royal concession:

'Our good friend Jacob Saulat, Sieur des Marez, has shown us that a book on the high chemistry of Hermes has fallen into his hands, entitled: Mutus Liber ...'

This way of announcing a work was common practice of ancient philosophers. They often presented in published form, the results of their meditations and experiments as if it were the work of an unknown Adept; manifest in some manuscript that one had had the good fortune to come across by accident. An example of this would be the author of *Songe-Verde*, who was most certainly French, but who remained completely unknown and who did not even take on a pseudonym. Some have speculated it was Bernard le Trévisan without any viable justification other than the fact that this alchemist, who wrote *Verbum Dismissum*, is cited several times in the preface of the anonymous booklet: 'People even claim that Le Trévistan is the author of this manuscript and that the original was written in German. Others claim that it was first printed in Italian. Nevertheless, I have only been able to find it in French.'[3]

The actual editor of the splendid allegory of *Songe-Verde*, in the same vein as the declaration of Altus, makes mention of the privilege accorded to him and presents this to the reader as follows:

'While I did not discover this Manuscript without difficulty, I will refrain from complaining about my pains if I learn that you receive it as willingly as I present it to you.'[4]

✳

This form of philosophical anonymity may have been refined to an art but it should not mislead us into taking the first few lines of the authorization by the monarch as the literal truth. The claim that the book had accidentally fallen into the hands of Jacob Sulat seems to contradict the discreet revelation contained in the anagram within the book which, as we have seen, is represented in the form of a signature on the last plate. This justifies the commonly accepted notion that this

Sieur des Marez was the author who hid behind the pseudonym of ALTUS. Transposed, this Latin adjective gives the five letters of the last name SULAT which, when read backwards, provides the noun TALUS, meaning anklebone or *astragal*. Students can find this word in the Index of *Dwellings of the Philosophers*, a reference which they most surely will find of interest.

As far as we are concerned, *Sulat* most likely is the name of our philosopher. It must certainly be preferred over that of *Saulat*, which has no mention in the dedication, even when taking into account that in those monarchical times of incertitude, disorder and utter darkness, the bureaucratic red tape of this republican epoch did not yet guarantee exactitude, order and clarity. It is far from certain, however, that Sulat was an actual surname. It may in fact have been yet another, even more involved, pseudonym given its close relation to the main subject of the Mutus Liber and the message that transcends science with its unique pictorial depiction.[5] *Sulat, Saulat or Soulat des Marez* in old French would be translated respectively as *joy* (joie) and the *consolation of the tides* (la consolation des marées). In *Gargantua* by Rabelais, one whose Hermetic knowledge is beyond doubt, the word is encountered in Chapter X of the first book:

'By whiteness, of nature itself, everyone understands joy, gladness, *soulaz*, pleasure and delectation.'

In *Dwellings of the Philosophers*, the chapter on *Hermetic Qabalah*[6] contains a list of philosophical surnames which are presented as puns playing on assonance, each expressing the particular knowledge or preoccupations of their possessors. To this list we could have added the qabalistically composed noun that was created by our Master in order to continuously remind us of the *Vulcan of the sun*: Fulcan-elli.

Among all of these assumed names and invented titles, the one of *Joseph Duchêne, sieur de la Violette*, most closely resembles the human-philosophical affinity of our author. It should be noted that he displayed quite different inclinations as well, namely those of a spagyrist; or in other words, inclinations similar to those of the empirically operating chemists of our time. There is no denying the extraordinary merit of this researcher. Joseph Duchêne, at the end of

the 16th century, acknowledged the presence of nitrogen in the composition of saltpetre. The fact that he did so becomes apparent from the following statement that is found in the noteworthy *Book on the Material of the Medicine of Ancient Philosophers:*

> 'There is a spirit in the salt of rock, which is of the nature of the air but which however cannot support a flame, but rather is contrary to it.'[7]

In his own unique way, Jacob Sulat, Sieur des Marez, shows himself to be an ancient alchemist and most probably an Adept. Indeed the pleasure, joy and consolation that the noble Altus so profoundly experienced during the ebb and flow of his celestial tides, resemble the experiences that Martinus Ortholanus (Hortulanus, the Gardener) named after the maritime garden — *ab ortis maritimis nuncupatus* — must have had during the periodic cultivation of his marine and moving gardens. We know little about Hortulain, except that he wrote an enlightening commentary on the *Emerald Tablet* of Hermes Trismegistus in the 14th century. A manuscript of that time entitled *The Book About the Composition and Operation of the Great Stone — Liber de Magni Lapidis compositione in operatione —* (*ut dicit Ortholanus*) has been preserved as a testimony thereof (ut dicit Ortholanus). The following passage from this manuscript provides an exact date of its completion:

> '... up until the present year and day, during which this book was written; that is to say, in the year of the Incarnation of our Lord, one thousand three hundred twenty-five, ten days before the first day of the month of May of the said year.'[8]

Hortulanus himself provides a date in another work he wrote most likely at a very advanced age some thirty-three years later, which is found in the fourth volume of *Theatrum Chemicum:*[9]

> 'The true practice of alchemy by the Master Ortholanum, excellent and experienced, in the year of our Lord 1358.'

Practica vera alchimica per magistrum Ortholanum, Parisiis probata et experta, sub anno Domini M CCC LVIII.

We have taken the opportunity to include the original Latin citations because most of these citations have never been translated or were inaccurately translated. For the convenience and the contentment of our readers we therefore consider it to be good practice to provide the reader with the original, either in the body of the text or as a footnote. Those who have become somewhat familiar with the language of Virgil in their school days will hence be able to verify our work. We encourage them to retrieve their grammar books and *Quicherat* from storage and save them from the clutches of oblivion. This suggestion springs from our commitment to preserve the language of the humanities and that of higher education — a language that was spoken as much as written in the scholarly Occident and in the Christian world up until the 18th century and which so many people so wrongly deem to be *dead*.

A few years before the start of the infamous Revolution, numerous writers in Europe still wrote in Latin. These were the successors, according to the School of Claudianus and Rutilius, with whom the so called decadent era of *Low Latin* began. This Latin has proven itself to be full of vigour, interest and charm, even though it certainly is quite different from the Latin of the Golden Age. In fact this difference underlines that, over the course of fourteen centuries, a language that was supposedly dead nevertheless continued to live on and to be used. Like with all living languages, it endured the inevitable influences and distinct modifications.

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Jacobus Sulat was a philosopher. This indisputable fact becomes clear from a notice that accompanied the first edition but which is missing from practically all other copies. One of the few copies that still contains this rare note was identified by Denis I. Duveen[10]. It was sold in an auction by Messrs Sotheby and Cº, 34 and 35 New Blond Street, in London, W. I., on Wednesday, April 18th, 1934. We know

this beautiful volume well since we held it in our hands several times, more than forty years ago, when we regularly visited our charming friend, the banker Lionel Hauser. He kept an extensive and important library at Victoire Street 92 in Paris from which, according to the aforementioned Englishman, this treasure had been released 10 years later.

The *Mutus Liber* mentioned under lot 523 and under the name Tollé, to which we will return shortly, was sold on the third day of auction. It was touted as a book that was 'exceedingly rare; in addition to the concession page, which is missing in many other copies, this copy contains a folio titled "Au lecteur" [to the reader] that is included before the title page and which seems to be entirely unknown to bibliographers.'

This sheet is also missing from the magnificent *Mutus Liber* printed on vellum which is preserved in the Rare Books Reserve department of the French National Library at the Hotel de Nevers. We must assume therefore that this sheet was somehow censored. The two copies that in accordance to the concession were meant for the public library most likely never reached it. The public library that the concession refers to is the one that had been set up by Colbert ten years prior to the book's publication in 1676. Colbert had established the library in the two buildings he owned in the middle of Vivienne Street, under the winged management of the famous and erudite Étienne Baluze de Tulle — Stephanus Balzius Tutelensis.

Fortunately, there exists one copy of the *Mutus Liber* in France that is complete and that still contains the confidential notice to the reader. In addition, this copy proves to be particularly suitable for photography because it is printed on paper that is not prone to discolouration. It is preserved in La Rochelle, the city in which it was originally printed and which it should never leave. We heard about it from Bernard Husson who we believe to be one of the best bibliographers of German spagyrics. We set about on a trip of three too-short days in the great company of M. Guérin, a librarian completely devoted to the arts.

This priceless booklet was part of the invaluable legacy of Clément

de La Faille. Upon the death of this learned naturalist in 1770, the book came into ownership by the *Royal Academy of La Rochelle* — Regiae Academiae Ruppellensi — as is testified to by the engraved *ex-libris* glued onto the back of the cover. In view of the charm and the lively panorama this ex-libris portrays, we have included it at the end of the present introduction.

The ex-libris shows the two words Victrice Minervâ[11], *by Victorious Minerva*, spread across the upper banner. These words clearly allude to the small scene in the title block that shows a right hand which, appearing from a cloud in a wavy sky, plants a lance in the earth. An olive tree sprouts where the lance strikes the earth. Later we will again encounter two branches of this tree when we reach the conclusion of the *fifteenth plate*.

At that point we will demonstrate that Hermeticism, if not operative alchemy, was still practised among the learned elite in the noble capital of Aunis in the 18th century.

In order to get an idea of the skill of the work and the degree of the knowledge of scholars in the final years of the reign of the Monarchy, one would do well to visit the La Faille 'cabinet of curiosities' in La Rochelle which has been restored in a most excellent way[12]. We ourselves have been granted the exceptional opportunity of visiting it under the experienced guidance of Mr. Erik Dahl, a man with great love for the ancient beauty of his city.

Equally precious collections from the same period were stored at the home of the doctor, Charles-René Girard de Villars. These collections have, unfortunately, disappeared without leaving the slightest trace. Counted among the lost items were the engraved copperplates that were used to print the images of the *Mutus Liber* in 1677[13] — a priceless item.

It is therefore from the copy preserved at the Municipal Library of La Rochelle that Roger-Jean Ségalat, art photographer, captured the images that allowed us to present an exact reproduction of the plates. This was greatly facilitated by Miss O. de Saint-Affrique, head librarian, who was so kind as to place the booklet for which she was responsible at our attentive disposal in her personal office. As a result

the reader can now peruse, by way of this edition, the additional lines addressed to the reader which are otherwise practically impossible to find in their original appearance and in their proper location. The proper location of these preliminary lines would be before the engravings. It should not be placed directly after the first plate which serves as a title to the work. This preliminary comment was printed on a separate page and was most likely intended as a loose leaf. It comes in the form of an advertisement and, much like the modern day blurb [*prière d'inserer*], is presented without any accompanying justification. In that sense it does not provide any explanation relevant to our earlier remark about the use of Latin or lack thereof in both this comment and in the royal authorisation. It was moreover written by the editor Pierre Savouret, a protestant born in 1650, who most likely made his debut in the noble art of printing. He published the plates of the Mutus Liber on behalf of an author whom he may never have met — in the same way that Jean Schemit, between the years 1925 and 1930, may never have met Fulcanelli. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, this editor went to work in Amsterdam and remained there until his death.

✳

The reader will be able to peruse with us the leaf, as brief as it is informative, which shows the profound degree of knowledge the young Savouret had about the world of alchemy. Thanks to him, we at least get some indication of who this Sieur des Marez was who paid the necessary dues for the concession to secure the publication rights of the book.

By anonymity the author steers clear of any feelings of base vanity and hence expresses the profound desire for real charity. Anonymity heralds both the discretion of its author and the virtue of its beneficiary. Jacob Sulat entirely met this standard of genuine charity and kind assistance. Convinced of the initiatory power of images, his book reinstated the symbolic iconography which, until that point, predominantly had been the appanage of sculptors and painters within the confines of religious and civil edifices.

Our Master, Fulcanelli, has convincingly demonstrated that a significant part of the decoration of churches, from humble parishes to the most ornate cathedrals, cannot satisfactorily be explained from a point of view that is limited to religion or morality. Quite often the hermetic sciences form the pretext of allegorical compositions. Such is the case in particular with the Notre-Dame cathedrals of Paris and Amiens. The small bas-reliefs that can be found superimposed all along the substructure have always been identified simply as expressions of good and evil, of virtues and vices, until Fulcanelli presented them in a different light. The error of exclusively interpreting these figures as religious symbols was the result of mindless routine. Bernard Champigneulle made this same mistake in his classic introduction to a magnificent album published in octavo format.14. He more or less repeated the opinion of his predecessors like Jourdain, Duval, Ruskin, the Abby Roze, Durand and many others. Our dear friend, Michel Carrouges, stood up to point out the contrary:

'Symbolism does not let itself be restricted. It is universal or does not exist.'15

By way of example, on the porch of Our Saviour in the Picardy Cathedral and immediately to the right of the stylobate amidst the quatrefoils, one may find a small depiction which according to the established opinion of orthodox authors would have simply expressed *severity* (dureté).

A seated female sovereign pushes back a servant who apparently has made some kind of critical mistake. She kicks him with her feet and strikes him with her hand. The cause of her lashing out at him seems to be connected to the covered bowl — a sort of goldsmith's *ciborium* — which falls from the hand of the servant. The brutality of this depiction may be surprising at first glance but, upon deeper reflection, underlines the gravity of the mistake. The queen of heaven and earth refuses to accept this expensive *vessel* as she prefers the *vase of nature* over it. This vase of nature is at the same time most humble and very noble. The *ram*, engraved on the shield of the woman on the upper bas-relief in this case, was chosen as a symbol of the lamb. It

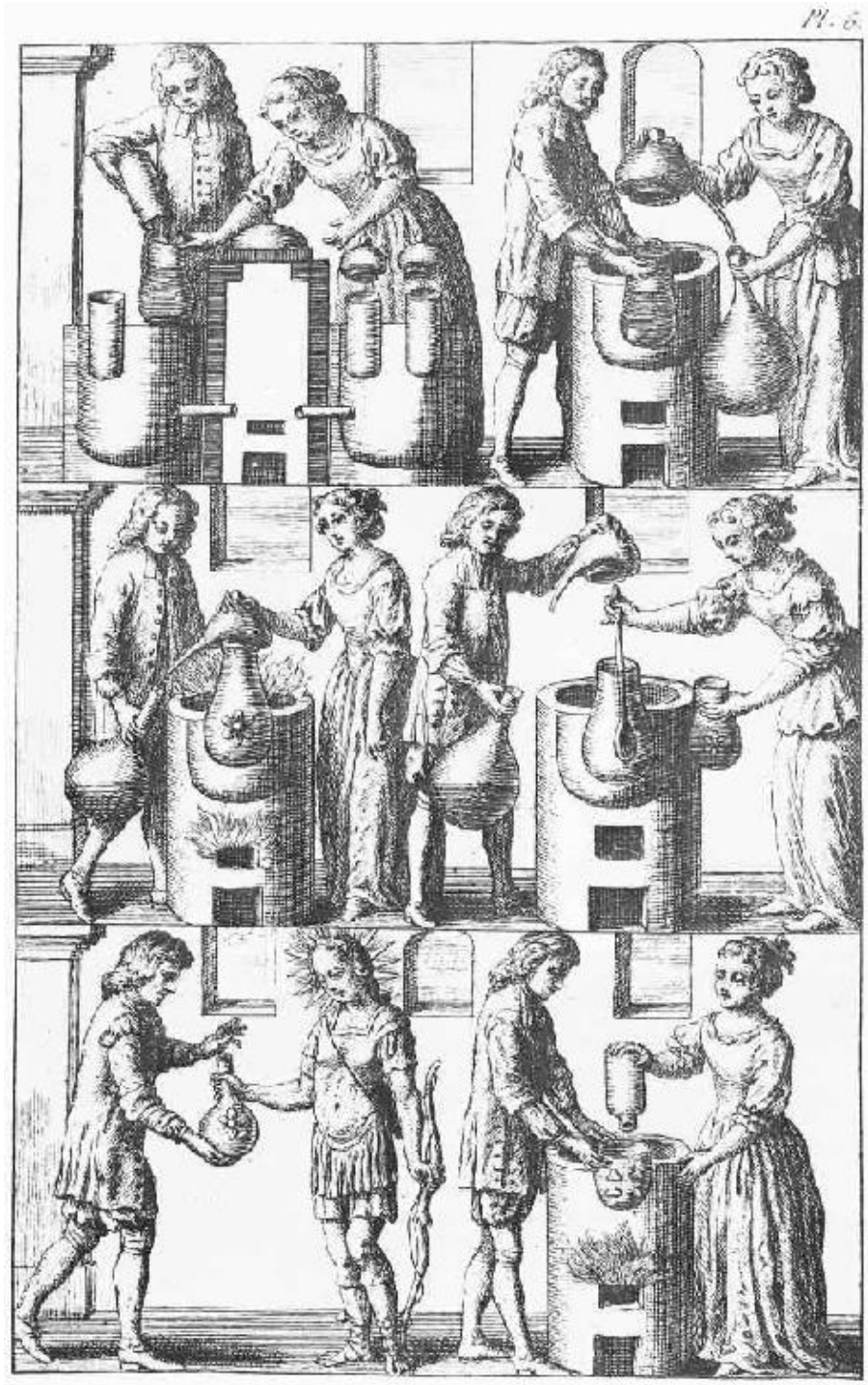
thereby expresses *softness* and hence the queen represents both the substance and the source.

The allegory clearly communicates caution against the paths of seduction and serves as a reference to sophism. We will shortly return to this subject in our study of the *second plate* of the *Mutus Liber*. At this point, we would best refer the reader to the comment written by Fulcanelli about an identical sculpture on the central doorway of Notre-Dame of Paris.[16]

The two books in Paris and in Amiens, which are both as mute as the work of Altus, contain pages [in stone] that seem to be copied faithfully at both locations. The physical effect of the chemical reaction that involves a meeting of two natures is accurately depicted by the dunking in water of an iron rod which has previously been made red hot in the fire.

On our medallion, the tempestuous reconciliation between the two human protagonists seems to have calmed down. These two protagonists accurately portray the final conjunction in the *third stage* of the Great Work, at the immutable and divine level of the Philosopher's Stone. A man and a woman embrace without any particular vehemence. He drops his pot and she neglects her distaff. On the stylobate of the Notre-Dame in Paris, the same antagonism is expressed through violence. The initiate, the man who brought the Notre-Dame sculpture to life, refrained from emphasizing the femininity of the woman through her clothing as he probably felt uncomfortable including her in such a savage fight. Taking into account the degree of love and respect medieval society had for women, it would be misplaced to conclude, without any further philosophical justification, that in the Cathedral of Amiens the woman was chosen to express vulgar *discord* or revolt against the man even if on account of the vigorous blows, the confrontation seems to be full of rage. It should be noted that the quatrefoil coat of arms, which is located above the image and which completes, shows a shield adorned with bouquets of flowers growing from the same stem. This clearly indicates the common origin of the two philosophical characters.

✳



This specific version of the *sixth plate* comes from an extremely rare

edition of unknown origin or date (probably Paris around 1725) but whose existence is deemed to be certain. It is the reproduction of the charming work of an unknown artist whose drawing talent does compensate the fact that he erroneously loosened the bow held by Apollo — a bow that should have been strung tight to the point of breaking. Manget respected this detail, as well as the seven sharp points that surround the head of the god, calling to mind the seven iron arrows that are required to isolate the *floscula Adeptorum* [Flower of the Adepts]. In the top right corner one can see that the water of the *bain-marie* has disappeared, a detail which the *Genevan* doctor had nearly overlooked as well.

On a related note one could add that the *Mutus Liber* resembles two ornate ceilings which were examined by the Master and ourselves respectively. Both contain a true treasure of symbolic scenes. These ornate ceilings were sculpted for the oratory of the Jean Lallemant Hotel in Bourges and painted in the guardroom in the Plessis-Bourré castle. Altus' book nevertheless appears to be superior to these works of art and symbolic thought because it shows the operations of the physical Great Work. This is underlined by the images of various glassware apparatus. The same pieces of apparatus are still in use in laboratories today even though they have gone through some minor changes in shape since the 17th century.

One must nonetheless approach the images with the necessary caution that is customary where printed texts or manuscripts are concerned. One must be aware that the clearer an author expresses himself, the less sincere he actually is. In this light, let the student heed the words from *The Secret Book of Artephius Regarding the Hidden Art and the Philosopher's Stone*:

> 'For is this art not qabalistic? Full of secrets? And you, in your folly believe that we openly teach the secrets of secrets, and you interpret our words according to their literal meaning? Know well — I am not at all envious like the others. But he who takes the words of other philosophers at face value, along with the vulgar meaning of names has already lost Ariadne's thread and wanders in the midst of the labyrinth, multiplies errors, and casts away his money for nought.'[17]

The Book on the Chemical Art by an unknown author[18] is elegantly written in the same spirit of profound philosophy and contains a comprehensive mixture of sublime speculations and laboratory work. It dedicates its twelfth chapter to the eternal teachings of the Masters, where it explains 'a few obscure references as found in the books of the Philosophers of this School' — *Quasdam proportiones obscuras in libris Philosophorum huius Diatribae positas explicat*.

In this book, the anonymous alchemist, the identity of whom is not

just uncertain but is truly unknown, recalls the austere rule imposed by Plato:

> ‘One must write with ambiguity and in enigmas so that it will be rejected by those who accidentally stumble upon the book and who read it without understanding.’
> Scribendum est per ambages & aenigmata, ut si fortè mari vel terra iactari librum contigerit, qui legerit non intelligat.

✳

We believe this digression is not importunate, especially since we live in a world with a distinctly different iconography compared to that of Altus. Obviously, Sieur des Marez was not the only person to use drawings and engravings on vellum or paper. Plenty of authors among the most learned enhanced their texts with symbolic plates of profound meaning and oft-times with an infinitely seductive appeal. Compared with these, the plates of Altus overall seem to offer little in terms of coherence. Magophon, to whom we will return later, was the first to caution against this. He specified that if ‘the second plate is not in the proper place of sequence ... the third plate is not in the proper place either.’

It should be noted that an incorrect sequence of the plates is not the only factor that may complicate a derivation of the proper succession of operational stages. It is a fact that it was the custom, if not the rule, among ancient authors to write their treatises in such a way that all parts of teaching were scattered and jumbled around, like the disconnected pieces of a puzzle that one must apply oneself to in order to reunite them into a logical picture or pattern.

Sulat’s fifteen skilfully elaborated scenes of the Great Work do not follow the proper order of operation either. In the course of this commentary, for as far as possible, the correct sequence will be re-established. Perhaps some will reproach us for not reordering the plates in the right sequence to begin with, as that would be in line with the most elementary form of logic and didactics. Notwithstanding this standard of common sense, our respect for the published

monument and the integrity of its message, as well as our obedience to the ancestral discipline, outright prohibits conformation to the common standard.

One must acknowledge that when it comes to work in the laboratory, all manner of precautions are in play. The laboratory is where experimentation is as straightforward as truth in its very essence. In the laboratory, truth appears to be so friendly and uncomplicated that it is a dream to understand and easy to accept the obligation it entails to silence and to keep it a secret. Therefore, it is not surprising that the prudent Altus opened his work with Jacob's dream and closed it with the gesture made by the duo of *artists*, namely the sign of silence.

At that point the alchemist and his female companion finally enjoy their rest, in the ineffable tranquillity of their great victory, after having gone through great pains together with their patient manipulations over the course of thirteen plates out of the fifteen pages that make up The Mute Book. Should we infer from this unremitting collaboration that our author Jacobus *Sulat*, also called *Altus*, was blessed with the exclusive and very uncommon privilege of having a wife or concubine as his aid and partner of choice? We must resign ourselves to the fact that the nature of this relationship will remain impossible to determine for as far as the implicit physical and spiritual communion is concerned.

The case of Nicholas Flamel in this sense is very special as he enjoyed the company of a wife who was understanding above all expectation, above even the most excessive and least reasonable expectation. This French scribe lived at the main street of Mariveaux (today Nicholas Flamel Street) when he discovered the unique book that would soon change his life and which would lead him into solitude. It would also be the cause of continuous worries and of many a sigh. He wrote the following about his discovery of the book and the support of his newly-wed wife:

'My wife Perenelle, whom I had married recently and love as much as myself, was astonished and concerned greatly, endeavouring to comfort me and desiring earnestly to know whether she could not help

me in my distress.'[19]

She was convinced in her resolution to share everything: the work and repose, the pleasure and pain, the miraculous and the ordinary, prudent frugality and generous abundance. Flamel continues:

'I could not hold my tongue, and had to tell her everything and show her this beautiful book. The very instant that she saw it she fell in love with it as much as I had myself.'[20]

It is in this way that Flamel and his companion, as a result of their combined endeavour and perseverance, received the gift of the red stone. On 'the twenty-fifty day of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand three hundred eighty-two,' they achieved their first transmutation:

'I perfected it three times with the help of Perrenelle, who understood the work as well as I did, as she had helped me in all operations. Without a doubt, if she had wanted to perfect it herself, she would have succeeded.'[21]

✳

In this intimate collaboration a household was centred around the Great Work. In that sense as well as with regard to the *modus vivendi* of our dear Flamel, it resembles that which Jacob Sulat, Sieur des Marez, depicts with the couple who carry out the tasks in his images. We do have some details on the existence of the faithful Disciple from the Parisian Parish, Saint-Jacques-de-la-Boucherie, but as to our alchemist from La Rochelle on the other hand, we have not managed to discover even the slightest trace of biographical data that could provide any certitude on his place in society at that time.

An author of the *Journal des Sçavans* found out about the existence of the *Mutus Liber* shortly after its publication. Even though that author took his time to write a commentary about the book over the course of summer and despite the fact he breathed the air of the same kingdom, he did not include a single word about the identity and life of the author.

Louis-Étienne Arcère of the French Oratory, the only man who could have discovered something, does not provide us with anything

of value either. His main work was written with the help of Father Jaillot and gained great acclaim in its genre. It abounds with information that is gathered with a praiseworthy respect for objectivity despite the occasional hint of conformist judgements. The French Royal Academy of Literature received this work and Arcère was pensioned there as payment for his book. The book contains only a single reflection on the anonymity of Altus, his companions, their science and the *Mutus Liber*, a reflection which lacks sophistication and which is destitute of intellect. It reads as follows:

'The author of this book is one of these men who dabble in chemistry and drive themselves into poverty. Obsessed with the discovery of their Philosopher's Stone, they have enough knowledge to ruin themselves and not enough to see the limits of human intellect, which will never achieve the transmutation of metals.'[22]

A similar sententious opinion Is found in the *Journal des Sçavans*, number 17, dated Monday 26 August 1677. It announced the release of the *Mutus Liber* to those interested in the Hermetic science — or rather to 'those who would not be annoyed by the fact that in the book, its soul and words are given to the many mute figures that compose it.' The anonymous writer of this statement, moving into the first person, adds with the same air of self-righteousness:

'I will content myself with deciphering a few of them, leaving it to the author to give them whatever other meaning he feels like.'

He ignored the illustration on the title page, as well as plates numbered 3, 5–7 and 9–12. The last four plates were grouped together under the scant common denominator that they designated that 'saltpetre or the universal solvent is used to prepare the universal mercury.'

This sums up what the undistinguished critic had managed to glean from the *eighth plate*. His exegesis is relevant in particular to the plates with numbers 2, 4, 8, 13, 14 and 15, and proves to be so short that we will be able to cite it in extenso with each corresponding image as we proceed with our commentary.

This primogenitor of scientific periodicals [Journal des SÃ§avans] started its erratic explanation with a note to its readers about the two

booksellers who sold the *Mutus Liber* in Paris: Pierre le Petit and Estienne Michallet. This and other facts give reason to believe that the beautiful album was printed in limited numbers and was quite expensive. Sulat's collection continued to be widely sought out around the middle of the 18th century. It remained prized despite the appearance of the re-print in 1702 by Jean-Jacques Manget at the end of his first volume, and a following one some twenty years later. We will return to this shortly. Johannis Vogt addressed this fact about the *Mutus Liber* in particular in his *Historical-Critical Catalog of Rare Books*.[23]

Today, the second edition of *The Mute Book* which we owe to the famous Genevan doctor is still the one most well known. It is found, as mentioned earlier, in the precious *Curious Chemical Library, or Comprehensive Lexicon of Things Pertaining to Alchemy*.[24] Compared with the first printing it presents certain differences, the most obvious of which we have touched upon in our last book, as a practical introduction to the study of the two books of *Fulcanelli*[25]. One of these differences can be found at the very beginning of the book without words — the book that is not without voice. The landscape serves to set the scene of the title page. Some drastic changes in the landscape can be observed in the later edition. The relevance of this and other apparent variations in the plates will be explained in the course of this commentary.

Needless to say, we are well aware that Jean-Jacques Manget was a knowledgeable person who was both honest and well-informed. We therefore limit our reproach to his mediocre reproduction of ltus' engravings. He held a favourable disposition towards the engravings, as he stated them to be without artifice. Sulat and his evasive companion, however, qualified them as hieroglyphics. Here is the short phrase with which Manget points out the existence of the *Mutus Liber*. This phrase is located at the end of the first volume of the *Index of treatises and Chapters Contained in the Curious Chemical Library*[26]. This index follows directly after the preface and like the preface has no page numbers:

'Mute Book from an Anonymous Author, which most

evidently unveils the Mysteries of Alchemy to the sons of the art by use of simple figures.'

Anonymi Liber Mutus Alchemiae Mysteria filiis Artis nudis figuris, evidentissime aperiens.

The judgement of the alchemist-doctor is rather optimistic as he uses the Latin adverb in the superlative form, *most evidently*. He elucidates this with the operational considerations as expanded upon in the final part of his eloquent preface. That excellent introductory excerpt on the labours of alchemy includes one brief paragraph which speaks volumes about Manget's circumspect regard for that which constitutes the major goal of the *Mutus Liber*. The following quote shows that the philosopher-bibliographer could not have been more secretive, nor more *envious*, to use the word with which the Adepts qualified themselves in their determination to refrain from wrongfully disclosing their secrets:

'The spirit of the dew of May is prepared in the following way. Take a sufficient quantity of May dew or rainwater, or snow in the same way, obtained in March or the beginning of April, and distil its spirit in the ordinary way.'

Spiritus roris maialis paratur sequenti modo. Recipe roris aut pluviae maialis, aut itidem nivis exeunt Martio aut ineunte Aprili collectae q. s. ex iisque modô ordinariô spiritum destilla.

We are compelled to note furthermore, for the benefit of the reader, Jean-Jacques Manget's wish that each of his two volumes would end with a progression of curious metal engravings. In the case of the second volume this concerns a series of small circular symbolic medallions of the *Hermetic Garden With Illustrations Accompanied by the Viewpoint of Each author;*[27] which comprises the elegant opuscule in Latin that is ascribed to Daniel Stolcius. These insets are remarkable in terms of quality. They circumscribe between two circles the epigraphs that correspond with the philosopher in question. The printed

quatrains on the back side of the page are an aid to understanding the enigmatic images. This is without doubt the most fascinating gallery of ancient alchemists, ranging from Hermes to Mylius. This sigillary anthology of valuable precepts is presented by Jean-Jacques Manget in the following laudatory way:

> 'The hermetic garden of Daniel Stolcius, the Bohemian of Stolcenberg, formed by the Flowers of the Philosophers, is engraved on copper and explained in very precise short verses. Those passionate about Chemistry as well as weary laboratory attendants will enjoy reposing in this Philosophical Library.'
>
> *Danielis Stolcii de Stolcenberg Boemi Hortulus Hermeticus è Flosculis Philosophorum cuprô incisis conformatus, & brevissimis versiculis explicatus; quô Chemiae studiosi pro Philotheca uti, fessique Laboratoriorum ministri, recreari possint.*

✳

We cannot blame the erudite and wise promoter of the *Chemical Library* for not having included the note to the reader and the concession page of the original book of Altus. Neither can we blame him for being too licentious in its reproduction or the awkward mistakes in the design.

As far as Jean-Jacques Manget's edition is concerned, it suffices to say that we prefer the edition that preceded it by twenty-five years as our guideline to complete our task. We will make sure not to repeat the same grave mistake of Émile Nourry and Paul Derain, who presented the Genevan edition without even indicating the existence of the La Rochelle edition.

While it is unlikely that the *Mutus Liber* was republished between the two previously mentioned printings, it is almost certain that it was republished in the third decade of the 18th century. A copy of this rare version, without location nor date (likely Paris, around 1725), was offered at the price of one thousand francs by Thiébaud, the successor

of Nourry, on Ecoles Street, in his catalog nº 62 in the year 1937. It was a small quarto volume bound in full-grain calfskin, with marbled endpapers and an ornate spine. The book had worn corners and came with a worn book jacket.

Thiébaud took this as evidence that this volume concerned an artist's proof of an edition that was never published, an opinion that we consider questionable. The editor's note in this book comprised seven numbered pages. Two plates, numbered 16 and 17, were added to the fifteen that we know. One of them shows the shape and details of an athanor and the other shows the cross-section of the two stoves. A manuscript of thirty-nine pages followed the plates. This included a description of the stove and philosophic athanor. This description and the two additional images were meant as a substitute and an elaboration of that which is addressed to the reader in the main text.

Clearly this was a work of great interest but it was not quite what the bookseller believed it to be in light of the supplementary manuscript pages.

Could it be that these pages which were written in the proprietor's own hand, and as we have said were mentioned in the printed leaflet, were actually part of a copy deprived of this important section?

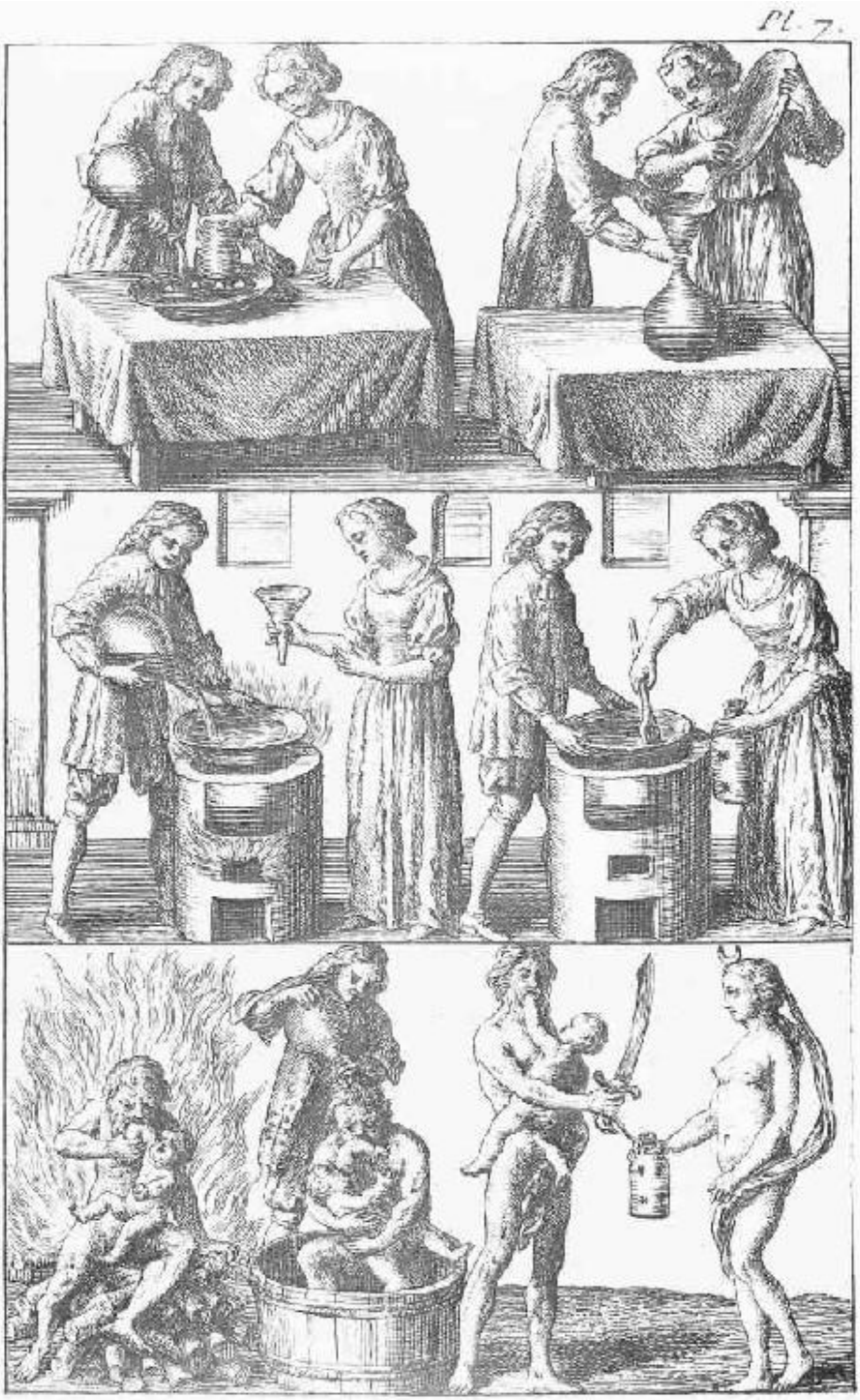
We are strengthened in our belief that this is indeed the case following the discovery that was made at the Saint-Ouen market by the poet Elie-Charles Flamand, one who was fascinated by alchemical mystery.

Our friend was strolling around looking for something pleasant and useful, patiently taking stock of the unthinkable mound of worthless chromos and ancient stamps sprawled along the side walk, when he had the good fortune to spot the two intaglios that are included with the present introduction. Right away, Elie-Charles recognized the small scenes of the *Mutus Liber*, which he had committed to memory. The joy of his discovery was about as great as his regret when it became clear that the wonderful find was limited, despite subsequent efforts, to only that pair of unexpected engravings — both of which are most elegant and most fine.

Within the image border and on the upper right hand side, the two

abbreviated markings, *Pl. 6* and *Pl. 7*, are clear evidence of the existence of other images which together would constitute an ancient copy of a meticulously made edition, an edition completely unknown to the most renowned specialists.

The clothing of the protagonists cannot be mistaken for anything else than that of the time of the Regency. If there is any remaining doubt regarding the existence of this genuine and fine reproduction, we can add that this seventh plate was discovered in two copies at the same place and at the same time. This allowed Élie-Charles Flamand to extend his kindness to us and offer the engraving as a gift, to be preserved separately from the other and thereby kept safe from the most threatening fate.[28]



This *seventh plate* is from the third edition. In 1937 a single copy was found. This image, as well as the fifth and sixth plates, are all

preserved at Saint Andrews University in Scotland. They are the only ones that are available to the public for viewing until, or if, a new discovery is made of any one of the seventeen plates that made up the album printed some fifty years after the original from La Rochelle.

The water of the tub in which Saturn squats down is not visible. The *artist* pours water over his head and the water then vanishes in the same way as in the engraving by Jean-Jacques Manget.

In his *Introduction to Chemistry*, John Read refers to these same two engravings [*Plates 6 and 7*] to which he adds a *fifth*. He includes the same image of the seventh plate. It is the exact same as ours.

This is what the very kind professor of chemistry declares in this respect, in a disjointed manner that magnifies the imprecision of the English language:

'An untraced and incomplete series of drawings in the St. Andrews collection, apparently a later French version of the original designs, which gives a reproduction in modified form of exclusively the fifth, sixth and seventh plates of the *Mutus Liber*[29].

It completely escapes us as to why first Émile Nourry and then later Paul Derain refer to Jean-Jacques Manget's copy rather than to the original since we will not insult them by assuming that they never had the chance to read it.

Émile Nourry was an eminent folklorist who authored a number of works under the name of Pierre Saintyves during the period from 1910 to 1935. His works are all related to the philosophy of Hermes and are of considerable value. At the beginning of the year 1925, we offered him the manuscript of *The Mystery of the Cathedrals* for perusal but he gave preference instead to publishing the very honest and sagacious typescript of Paul Vulliaud, dedicated to Joseph de Maistre, in a volume that might well be called the delight of the successors and disciples of Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin.

It will not come as a surprise therefore that the author of *Liturgies Populaires* [Émile Nourry] was the publisher who, 'on the twenty-third of June M.CM.XIV' two hundred eighty-five copies of the *Mutus Liber*, numbered and initialled by his own hand. The fact that he chose to title the work of Altus as *The Book of Images Without Words* can be considered an unfortunate choice as according to Magophon, 'translating the *Mutus Liber* as *The Mute Book Without Words* is a philosophical antithesis.'

Thus reads the objection of the writer of the *Hypotyposis*[30] who presents and comments on the succession of plates in a very beautiful, large in-folio edition on Japanese paper.

Magophon as in Μάγος, Magos, Mage and Φωνή, Phone;, *Voice* —

the Voice of the Mage, is the *telling* pseudonym that barely veils Pierre Dujols, the erudite librarian whom many people believe was Fulcanelli. Whether the old man, just as we are now, died in the flesh or whether we killed him so that he could live on in spirit is a great secret which we shall not further expose. It is unlikely we will be forthcoming with an explanation in the future and therefore nobody will come to know about it, least of all after our own disappearance from this earth.

In any case, given Magophon's broad knowledge of Hermetic sciences, it seems that he would foremost have to be held responsible for the erroneous statement that followed the new title: 'Re-edited according to the original.'

Did Pierre Dujols have a place reserved in his study for a laboratory where he performed various operations by his own hand? Or did he entrust the work to a reliable third person? It is possible or even quite likely that the latter is true on account of what we heard almost first hand,[31] in the year 1920. We will therefore include the best passages of the work of Pierre Dujols and the explanation he provides in examining the plates. This will complement our own findings and the explanation we ourselves will provide as we proceed. What Pierre Dujols wrote at the beginning of his *Hypotyposis* matches, as far as scope is concerned, our own elucidation:

'Our aim in adding these few pages of comments to the allegorical plates of the *Mutus Liber*, without lifting the mantle of secrecy of the philosophers, is as we have been proposed, to facilitate its reading and a sincere interpretation. This is for the true investigators of science, those that are honest, patient, hardworking and diligent like bees, and not the curious, idle and frivolous who spend their lives uselessly fluttering from one book to another, without ever stopping to extract their true nectar.'

✳

As far as Magophon's incursions into the peripheral domain of traditional knowledge is concerned, that is, the domain in which a secret but powerful influence of an assembly of Adepts over the

government of commoners is manifest, the revelations made by Magophon may strike some as peculiar. Given their brevity, these revelations are more like allusions. They often appear to be disconnected like, for example, the following cryptic passage:

'As the saying goes: Kings rule but do not govern. And indeed even in these times there still seems to be a grey eminence behind the scenes who pulls the strings! The famous *galetas* of the Temple might not be abolished to the extent we suppose them to be and a book full of surprises could be written about the watermarks on banknotes and the images on coins.'

We will return to the subject of the first part of the last sentence regarding the secret garrett in the house of the Temple — *in domo Templi* — in another book. As far as the third proposition is concerned, it immediately reminds us of a question we posed to Fulcanelli. We asked him whether he knew of any abnormalities in fiat money at around 1916 that could justify Dujols' tentative observations. In response, the Master showed us a bill of one hundred francs which had been in circulation in those days but which had been removed from the economy during the large-scale replacement of old coins and banknotes in 1945. In fact, it was not its watermark but rather the old-fashioned headpiece which we examined. It contains a surprising detail which is worth a closer look. The fact that this banknote was quickly removed was because of the disgraceful and contemptuous mockery it expresses. Nonetheless, the unique composition of its banal image continued to circulate until the previously mentioned currency change. The banknote is currently very sought after and is valued at a minimum price of twenty new francs.[32]

So what is it that this bank note shows that is so extraordinary? One strange word immediately catches the eye with its large capital letters. It clearly is not an abbreviation because it has no periods:

L O M

These two consonants and its central vowel mark the prominent package [in French: *ballot*] held by the young boy who is shown

standing up naked in the right-hand corner of the Luc-Olivier Merson version. The perfect consonance with the French *l'homme* [the man, mankind] makes for a fine rebus that alludes to the average value of human life at the beginning of the century, both in a figurative and in a literal sense. This allusion is drawn from the combination of *l'homme* with the meaning attributed to the French noun *ballot* [meaning both the physical *package* held by the boy, and the word *idiot*]. Consider furthermore that a reverse reading of the barbarous monosyllable adds to the idea of depreciation through its association with *mol*, the ancient form of the French adjective *mou* [meaning *weak*].

It would not be in good taste to dwell on this play of words at too great a length. However, we must share one more observation which underlines that the above mentioned image was not merely the result of an accidental or involuntary act of the artist which he signed with three proud initials. The few lines that follow convinced us of this. The words below are taken from a speech by FranÃ§ois Flameng who was President of the Academy of Fine Arts. The speech was given at the funeral of Luc-Olivier Merson on November 17, 1920:

'With infinite respect and with deep emotion, I pay tribute to the honest and scrupulous man, who was hard on himself, who was modest and never complacent, whose simple and patriarchal life passed far from the noise, far from the intrigues, completely dedicated to the passionate worship of the particular art that he respected above all else ...'

✳

As discussed earlier, before the beautiful folio volume of Émile Nourry was published, another edition seems to have appeared. According to a note in the magazine *Psyché*, in issue nº 498 from the month of May, 1939, this other edition was attributed to the Doctor of Medicine, Emmanuel-Henri Lalande, better known by his pseudonym of Marc Haven. 'It is out of stock and almost impossible to find', the anonymous annotator states regarding this introduction to the *Mutus Liber*.[33]

Isn't it disconcerting that the publication *Psyché* did not provide any

references to this edition which, as it specifies, was the work of its 'former and dearly missed collaborator'? It does not provide any further substantiation that could bring us closer to the truth about the matter or even merely to the possibility of it being true! Despite all our efforts we were never able to find a copy of this phantom edition, which most likely had failed to meet the required legal tax.

The declaration by the doctor Marc Haven, in the first paragraph of his meagre introduction, is nevertheless of relevance:

'This present re-edition has been made according to the copy of our dearly missed friend Albert Poisson.'

At the start of the bibliographical details, Marc Haven mentions that the alchemist — who died young, wasted away by work and tuberculosis, — possessed the original edition of the *Mutus Liber*. Therefore this is likely to be the edition published by the son-in-law of Master [Nizier-Anthèlme] Philippe of Lyon: the doctor Emmanuel-Henri Lalande. The preface written by Marc Haven which was reproduced in the magazine *Psyché* included the following philosophical and solemn pledge:

'I pledge before the Eternal, in the presence of whom I soon may appear in the nudity of my being, that despite my imperfections and disgrace, I have been granted the chance to understand the hieroglyphics inside the *Mutus Liber*, just like I was able to decipher the names and numbers on its exterior, as well as the final sentence: *'Oculatus abis.'* I will say, along with the author, the great Khunrath and all the masters: 'ORA, LEGE, LEGE, LEGE, RELEGE, LABORA, ET INVENIES.'

Thus ends the brief note with which Marc Haven introduces novices to the study of the *Mutus Liber*. He remains silent about his understanding of Altus' mysteries.

We cannot ascertain if this was meant to serve as an actual introduction to those mysterious plates. We can only relate what we heard from Julien Champagne who was a frequent guest at Dujols' house before the Great War. He informed us that at the very last moment, Émile Nourry chose the copious Hypotyposis of the erudite bibliophile over the concise preface of the doctor-writer.

This preface by Marc Haven finally saw the light of day some thirty years later when Paul Derain used it for his printing of the *Mutus Liber* in 1942,[34]

once again including the engravings that we know to have been commissioned by Jean-Jacques Manget and which he may have redesigned based on the La Rochelle *originals*.

✳

Before we leave the subject of the writings of doctor Lalande, we would like to point out one last remark that is included in his rather short introduction. Lalande remarked that it would be an error to attribute the *Mutus Liber* to Tollé as Antoine-Alexandre Barbier did in his Dictionary of *Anonymous Works*.

Nonetheless, who was this Tollé, sometimes spelled Tolé or even as Taullé? He was certainly not Jacobus Tollius, the German philologist and alchemist who was born around 1630 and who died in 1696. This Jacobus Tollius was a doctor in Gouda in 1670 who not once travelled to France. It surprises us that John Read could include such an error in his book:

> '... but others, apparently for good reason, have ascribed the authorship to a physician of La Rochelle named Jacques Tollé (1630–1696), who achieved a reputation as an alchemist and gold maker."[35]

The English historian and chemist based this conclusion on the words of Louis-Étienne Arcère who, without indication of a first name, surmised as follows:

'I believe that the real author is Tollé, a doctor from La Rochelle, a great chemist. The pseudonym Altus easily designates him as such.'[36]

We believe this assumption is somewhat far-fetched as it was based on the poor synonymy between the Latin verb *tollere* and the sublime *altar*! However, unlike the former, the latter does not convey the meaning of 'taking away' and 'destroying.'

The only substantial piece of evidence worth mentioning was retrieved from the unjustly depreciated book by Monsieur de

Monconys. The evidence found therein is of relevance, despite the fact that it was published after the fact and despite the fact that the last name again comes without a first name:

'On the same day (July 14, 1645, in La Rochelle) I saw him, Mr. Tole the Doctor, who labours himself in chemistry, and who also draws, paints and understands perspective.'

'In the afternoon (July 15), I had a personal meeting with Mr. Tole the Doctor, who granted me the favour of revealing some of his knowledge to me.'

On September 30 and October 10 of the same year, 1645, Balthazar de Monconys visited Tole once again and gave him a text entitled '*Meditation on the Natural Production of Metals and the Way to Concoct the Philosopher's Stone.*'[37]

In the *Inventory of Departmental Archives Prior to 1790*, page 142, we found the last name preceded by a first name of Daniel rather than that of Jacques or Jacob:

'Case taken from the judicial tribunal of the year 1644 — Arnault Bruneau against Daniel Tollé, medical doctor.'

On page 206:

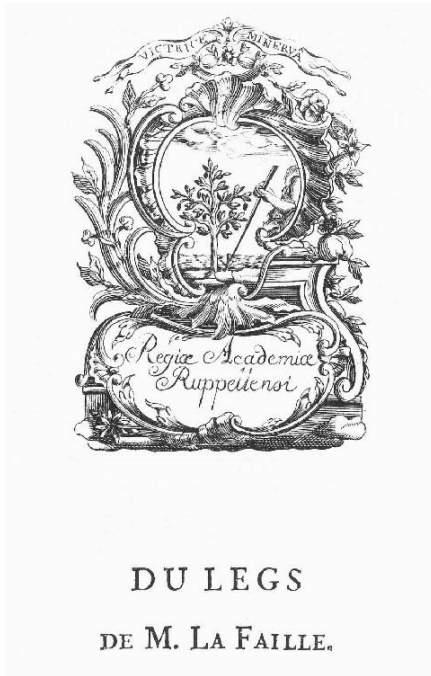
'Legal guardianship of the minors of Charles Auboineau, merchant, entrusted by the family council to Daniel Tollé, medical doctor, and one of the general practitioners of the city.'

While it was common in the old days for renowned doctors to be good chemists as well, their skills rarely extended to the art of drawing, painting and perspective. Does this exceptional case not, in all respects, pertain to limited skills with the pencil? This would certainly explain the weakness of the forms and the lack of decoration in the images of the *Mutus Liber*. Needless to say, the imperfections in the design are of no concern to those who delight in soberness and simplicity of figurative expression.

In conclusion, these few fragments of information do not even nearly suffice to come to a convincing conclusion about the identity of Altus. The mystery about his identity remains intact, hiding forever in an impenetrable way behind the identity of the illusory Jacob *Sulat* who was both privileged by the king and an accomplice. The only

thing that is certain is the particular way that the *unknown philosopher* endeavoured to rise above the level of ordinary human existence. We are going to apply ourselves to identifying that particular way and to following in the footsteps of Altus.

Before we embark on this adventure, we would like to note, perhaps redundantly, that we arrived at our current understanding with the help of our friends Jean-Jacques Pauvert, Jean Castelli and Jean-Pierre Castelnau, through our meetings on Nesle street.



FROM THE LEGACY OF
M. LA FAILLE

AU LECTEUR

QVOY-QVE celuy qui a fait les frais de l'Impreſſion de ce Livre, n'ait voulu mettre à la teſte ni Lettre dédicatoire, ni Préface, pour des raiſons qu'il a pardevers luy; j'ay cru, pourtant, qu'il ne trouveroit pas mauvais que je vous diſſe, que cet Ouvrage eſt admirable en cecy: C'eſt qu'encore qu'il ſoit intitulé, *Livre Muët*; néanmoins toutes les Nations du monde, les Hebreux, les Grecs, les Latins, les François, les Italiens, les Eſpagnols, les Allemans, &c. peuvent le lire & l'entendre. Auſſi eſt-ce le plus beau Livre qui ait jamais eſté imprimé ſur ce ſujet, à ce que diſent les Savans, y ayant-là des choſes qui n'ont jamais eſté dites par perſonne. Il ne faut qu'eſtre un veritable *Enfant de l'Art*, pour le connoître d'abord. Voilà (cher Lecteur) ce que j'ay cru devoir vous dire.

NOTE TO THE READER

WHEREAS the man who paid for the printing fees of this Book did not want to include a dedication nor preface for reasons he kept to himself, we, however, believe that a few words about this admirable Work are appropriate and can be summarized as follows. While it is entitled ***The Mute Book***, all peoples in the world, the Hebrews, the Greeks, the Romans, the French, the Spaniards, the Germans, etc., can nonetheless read and understand this book. Furthermore, according to the words of those who are learned in these matters, it is the most beautiful book that has ever been written on the subject because it contains things that have never been said by anyone, ever. One must be a true ***Son of the Art*** to penetrate the wisdom of this book. That is, dear reader, what we deemed necessary for you to know.

Plate 1

MUTUS LIBE
R. D. QUO LUMEN
tota Philosophia herme-
tica, figuris hieroglyphicis
depingitur, ter optimo
maximo Deo misericordi
consecratus, solisque
filiis artis dedicatus,
authore cujus nomen
est Altus.
21-11 82-Neg
53-82-72 Neg
82 81 33 Jud
RVPELLÆ
apud PETRVM SAVOVRET * cum Privilegio Regis
M · DC · LXXVII ·

Plate 2

Plate 3

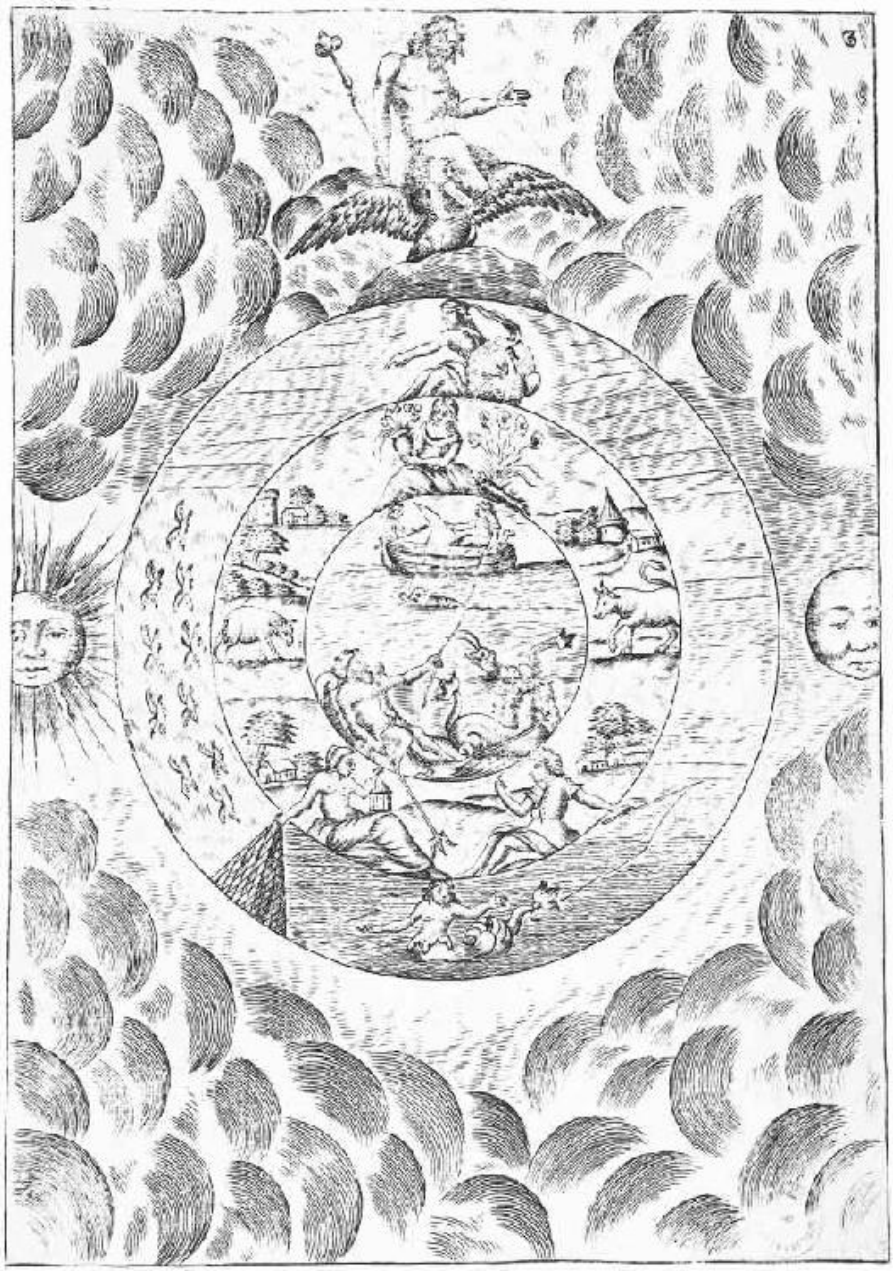


Plate 4

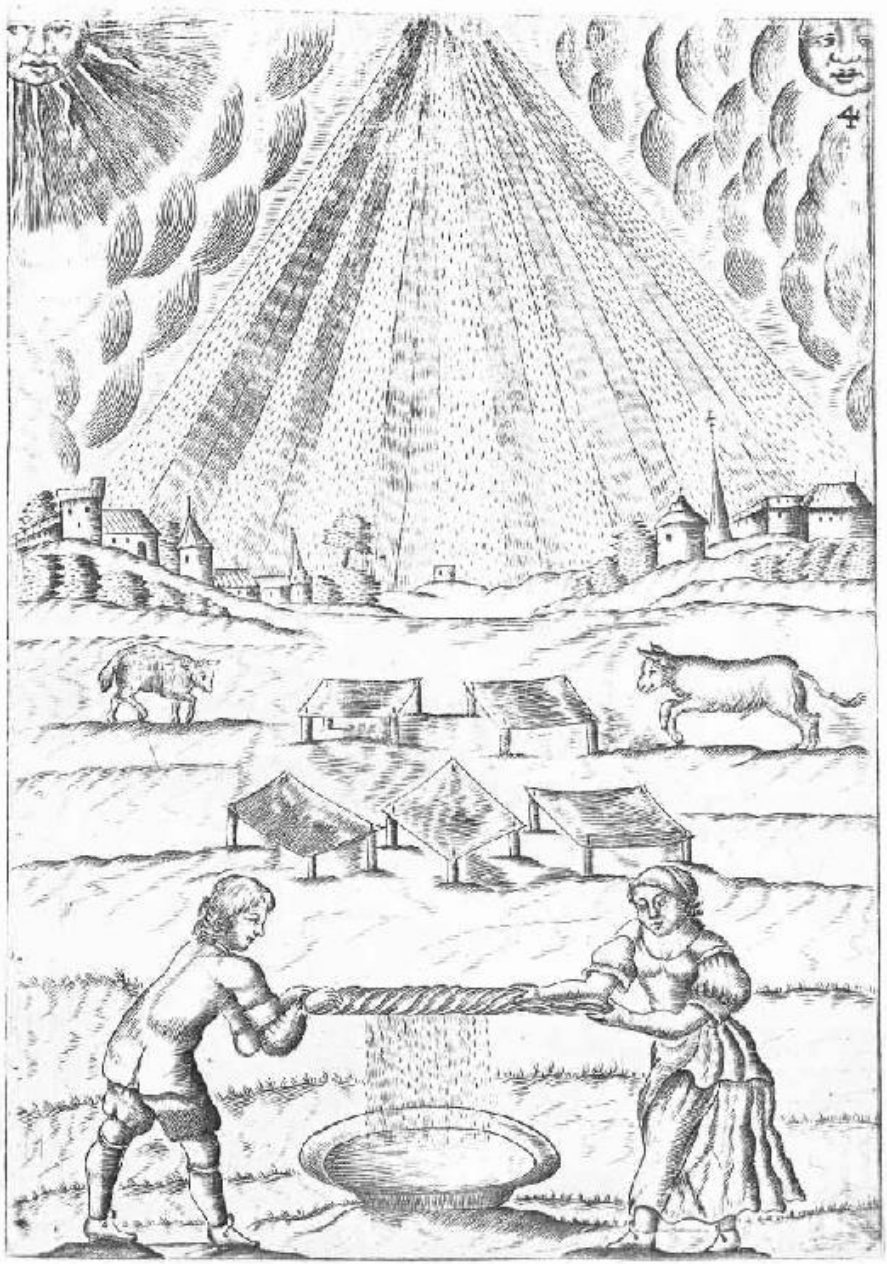


Plate 5

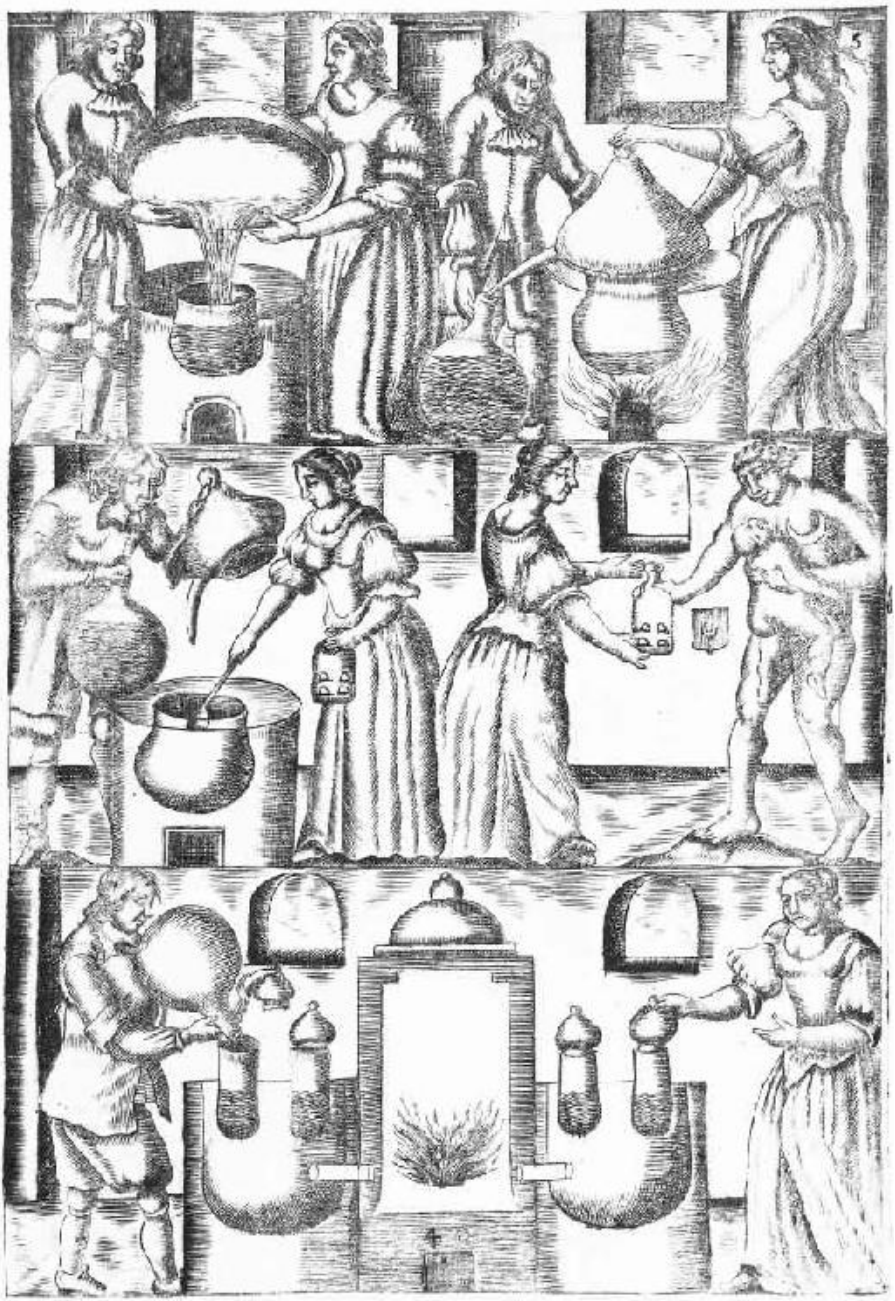


Plate 6

Plate 7

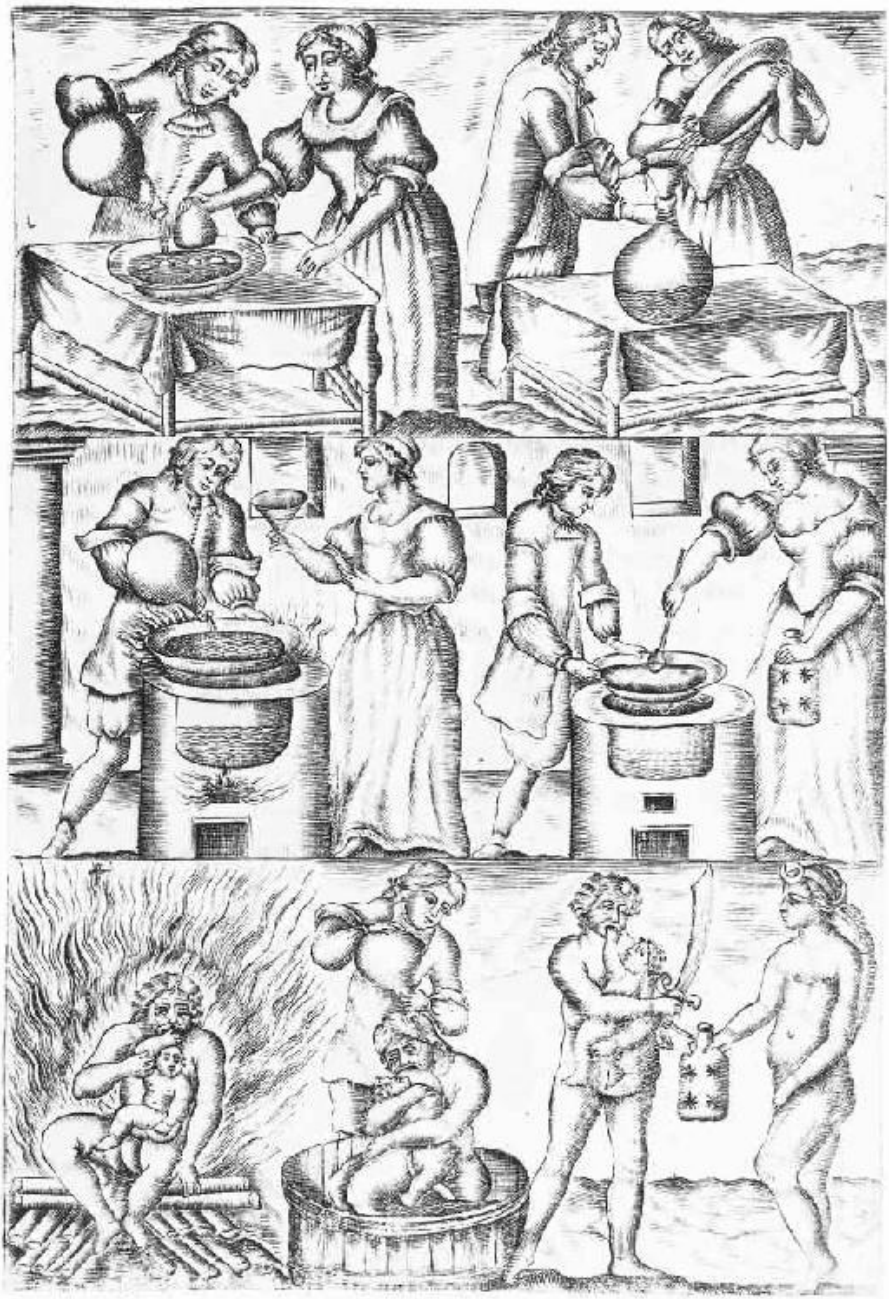


Plate 8

Plate 9

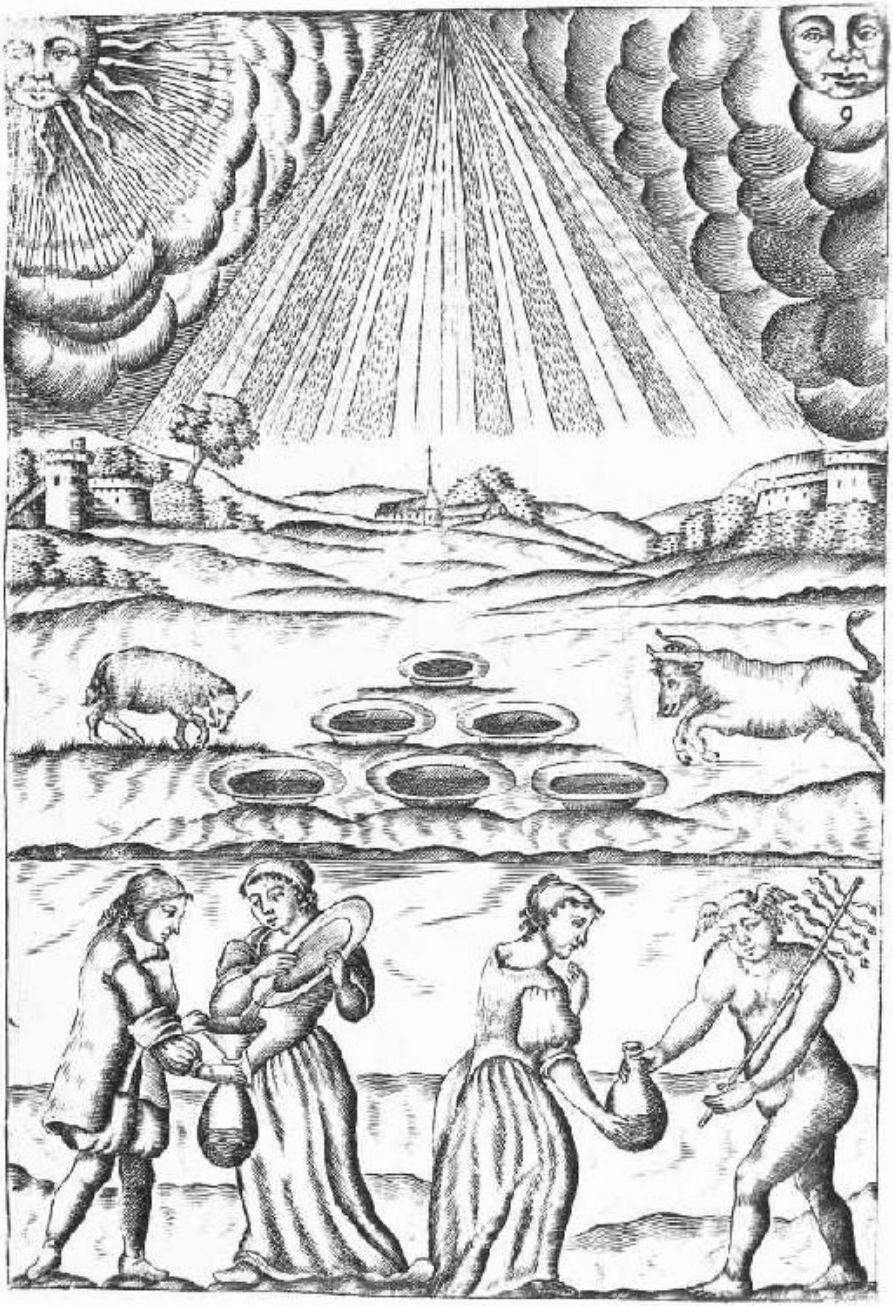


Plate 10

Plate 11

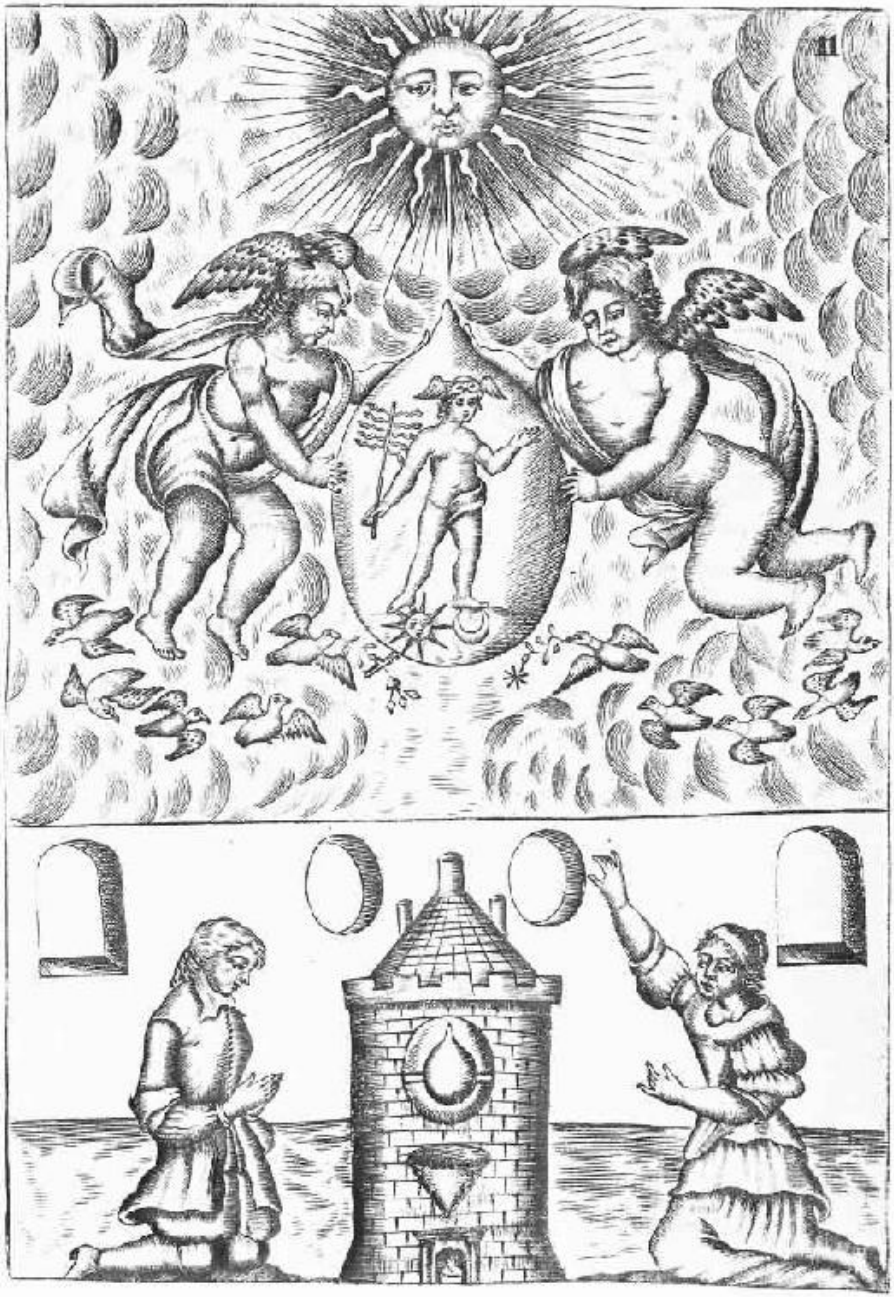


Plate 12

Plate 13

Plate 14

Plate 15

Privilége du Roy.

LOUIS PAR LA GRACE DE DIEV ROY DE FRANCE ET DE NAVARRE: A nos amez & feaux Conſeillers les Gens tenans nos Cours de Parlement, Maîtres des Requêtes ordinaires de nôtre Hôtel, grand Conſeil, Prevoſt de Paris, Baillifs, Seneſchaux, Prevoſts, leurs Lieutenans, & autres Juges qu'il appartiendra; SALUT. Noſtre bien amé Jacob Saulat, Sieur des Matez, Nous a fait remontrer qu'il luy eſt tombé entre les mains un Livre de la haute Chimie d'Hermes, intitulé: *Mutus Liber, in quo tamen tota Philoſophia Hermetica Figuris hieroglyphicis depingitur, ter optimo, maximo Deo miſericordi conſecratus, ſolisque Filiis Artis dedicatus, Autore cujus nomen eſt Altus*; lequel il deſireroit donner au Public. Mais il craint qu'après que luy, ou tel Libraire ou Imprimeur qu'il aura choiſi, en aura fait la dépenſe, d'autres n'entreprennent de l'imprimer, s'il n'a ſur ce nos Lettres néceſſaires. A CES CAUSES, voulant gratifier ledit Expoſant, Nous luy avons permis & accordé, permettons & accordons par ces Preſentes, de faire imprimer ledit Livre en telle maniére que bon luy ſemblera, pendant le temps & eſpace de dix années conſecutives, à commancer du jour qu'il ſera achevé d'imprimer pour la premiére fois, icelluy vendre & debiter par tout noſtre Royaume. FAISONS défenſes à tous Libraires, Imprimeurs & autres, d'imprimer, faire imprimer, vendre ni debiter ledit Livre, ſous prétexte d'augmentation, correction, changement de titre, d'impreſſion étrangére, ni autrement en quelque ſorte & maniére que ce ſoit, ni meſme en extraire quelque choſe, ſans le conſentement de l'Expoſant ou ſes ayans cauſe, ſur peine de confiſcation des Exemplaires contrefaits, de deux mille livres d'amende, & de tous dépens, dommages & interests; Et en cas de contravention, Nous nous en reſervons la connoiſſance & à noſtre Conſeil. A la charge d'en mettre deux exemplaires en noſtre Bibliothéque publique, un en noſtre Cabinet des Livres de noſtre Château du Louvre, & un en celle de noſtre trés-cher & feal le Sieur d'Aligre, Chancellier & Garde des Seaux de France, & de faire regiſtrer ces Préſentes és Regiſtres de la Communauté des Libraires de Paris, à peine de nullité des Préſentes: Du contenu deſquelles vous mandons & enjoignons faire jouïr l'Expoſant & ſes ayans cauſe, pleinément & paiſiblément; ceſſant & faiſant ceſſer tous troubles & empéchemens au contraire. Voulons qu'en mettant au commancément ou à la fin deſdits Livres, l'extrait des Préſentes, elles ſoient tenuës pour deüement ſignifiées; & qu'aux copies collationnées par un de nos amez & feaux Conſeillers & Secrétaires, foy ſoit ajoûtée comme à l'Original. MANDONS au premier noſtre Huiſſier ou Sergent ſur ce requis, faire pour l'exécution des Préſentes, toutes ſignifications, défenſes, ſaiſies, & autres Actes requis & néceſſaires, ſans demander autre permiſſion; nonobſtant Clameur de Haro, Chartre Normande, ou autres Lettres à ce contraires: Car tel eſt noſtre plaiſir. DONNÉ à S. Germain le vingt-troiſiéme jour de Novembre, l'an de grace mil ſix cens ſoixante-ſeize, & de noſtre regne le trente-quatriéme. Signé, Par le Roy en ſon Conſeil: DESVIEUX.

Ledit Sieur Saulat a permis à Pierre Savouret, Marchand Libraire à la Rochelle, d'imprimer, vendre & debiter ledit Livre, ſuivant l'accord fait entr'eux.

Achevé d'imprimer pour la premiére fois, le 1. Fevrier 1677.

Regiſtré ſur le Livre de la Communauté des Libraires & Imprimeurs de Paris, le 28. Novembre 1676. ſuivant l'Arreſt du Parlement du 8. Avril 1653. & celuy du Conſeil Privé du Roy du 27. Février 1665. THIERRY, Syndic.

Les Exemplaires ont eſté fournis.

CONSESSION FROM THE KING

Louis, by the grace of God, King of France and of Navarre: to our beloved and kind counsellors, the members of our court of parliament, Lord Chamberlain, Great Council, Provost-Marshal of Paris, Bailiffs, Seneschals, Provost-Marshals, their Lieutenants and other staff of our household, GREETINGS. Our dear Jacob Saulat, Sieur des Marez, has shown us that a book of the high chemistry of Hermes has fallen into his hands, entitled: *Mutus Liber, in quo tamen tota Philosophia Hermetica Figuris hierogliphicis depingitar, ter optimo, maximo Deo misericordi consecratus, solisque Filiis Artis dedicatus, Authore cujus nomen est Altus*; which he desires to present to the Public. However, he fears that after he and whichever Bookseller or Printer he chooses have paid the necessary dues, others will print it if our necessary Letters are not present. FOR THESE REASONS, to gratify the aforementioned Representative, we permit and accord him, through this Present document, the right to print the previously mentioned Book in whatever way he feels appropriate, for the duration of ten consecutive years, starting on the date of the first print run, and to sell it and distribute it throughout our Kingdom. WE PROHIBIT all Booksellers, Printers and others from printing, commissioning to be printed, selling or distributing said Book, under the pretext of amendment, correction, change of title, foreign print or any other possible reason, as well from taking excerpts from it without the consent of the Representative or the people who hold the rights to the book, under penalty of confiscation of counterfeit copies, two thousand books as a fine and all related costs, damages and interest; and in the event of such offences, We will file this information with ourselves and our Council. We also request two copies for our Public Library, one for our Cabinet of Books at Louvre Castle and one for our very dear and loyal Sieur d'Aligre, Chancellor and Keeper of the Seals of France, and that this present document be registered at the Registries of the Community of Booksellers of Paris, under penalty of nullification of the present terms: through which we summon you and order you to grant the

Representative and legal holders of rights full possession, completely and peacefully, ceasing and making cease any conflict or impediment to the contrary. It is our wish that by placing the excerpt from the present document at the beginning or end of said Book, it will be considered duly dignified, and that the copies verified by our well-loved and kind counsellors and Secretaries will receive the same certification as the Original. WE ORDER firstly that our Bailiff or Sergeant, for this request, carry out the execution of the Present document, all notifications, prohibitions, seizures and other requisite and necessary Acts, without asking for further permission, notwithstanding Clameur de Haro, Chartre Normande or other legal Injunctions to the contrary: Because we wish it so. GRANTED in S. Germain on the twenty-third day of November, the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred seventy-six, in the thirty-fourth year of our rule, Signed, by the King in his Council: OF ELDERS.

The said Sieur Saulat permitted Pierre Savouret, Merchant Bookseller in La Rochelle, to print, sell and distribute said Book, in accordance with an agreement made between them.

Printed for the first time on February 1st, 1677.

Registered with the Book of the Community of Booksellers and Printers of Paris on November 28, 1676, following the Parliament's ruling of April 8, 1653 and that of the King's Private Council on February 27, 1665. THEIRRY, Syndic.

The Copies were provided.

Commentary to the First Plate

This *first plate* is also the title page. Its main subject is the person who is fast asleep, re-experiencing during this last quarter of the 17th century the prophetic dream of the patriarch Jacob from the time of *Genesis*. Our hero smiles satisfied at his inner vision, mimicking Isaac's son with his head resting on a *stone* that serves as his pillow. The Latin dative Rupellae (in *La Rochelle*), placed just below the *knot* that ties the two strong rose bush branches together, clearly indicates that this is no ordinary stone.

The diminutive of *rupes*, the rock [La Roche], is rupella [La Rochelle]. This diminutive has the same meaning as the noun from which it is formed, but takes into account the nominal reduction of all things in the microcosm of the alchemist, namely to the proportions of matters in the laboratory. Therefore rupella does not only mean *a small rock*, the stone, but also the small mountain, the cave and the miniscule cavern. This is the same stone and cavern which Limojon de Saint-Didier's *Hermetic Triumph* displays on its cover and which is included in the legend borrowed from the *Seven treatises or Golden Chapters of Hermes Trismegistus:*

> 'Understand, therefore, and accept this Gift of God which is hidden from the thoughtless world. In the caverns of the metals there is hidden the stone that is venerable, splendid in colour, a mind sublime and an open sea.'[38]

There is a specific reason as to how Rupella in a sense emphasizes the knot in our image. According to Jean Lallemant, this knot symbolizes all the entanglements that must be cut. He makes reference to the prowess of Alexander of Macedonia when faced with the famous Gordian knot. At this point it is necessary to reflect on two other symbols chosen by the author. The Adept Fulcanelli shone light on these two symbols when discussing the images found in a charming hotel. This charming hotel, together with the Jacques Cœur Hotel, was

the rightful pride of the capital of the former province of Berry. We would like to highlight the close philosophical connection between two images used by Jean Lallemant, namely the *cut golden knot* and the *open book* engulfed in blazing flames. The latter is displayed on the ceiling of the building in Bourges and the former inside the splendid and precious manuscript preserved in The Hague.[39] These symbols have been the subject of calumny, slander and fierce debate. They cynically express the unethical intentions of the merchant whom history has come to identify the alchemist with, his rapacious greed in business and his immoral determination to burn the books of his accounts. Lallement's *cut golden knot* is the same as the cracked rock or the open earth of esoteric texts whether they are sacred or profane. It is also the stone of Altus and of Jacob and, even more expressively, that of Jean de Roquetaillade. The latter was a Franciscan alchemist from the 14th century better known by the name of Joannes de *Rupescissa* — the separated rock.

These are terms that serve as an allegory to the liquation of the material at the beginning of the Great Work, in particular the separation of light from darkness through the agency of iron. With the help of fire this opens the Great Book of Nature. A depiction thereof, without caption, was included by the Adept from Bourges on the ornate ceiling of his extraordinary oratory.[40] Jean Lallemant included this same symbolic book in the miniature illustrations of his volume which is presently preserved in Holland. It is preserved in a state with the seven affixed seals closed, that is to say inviolate. Its cover is adorned with the following enigmatic statement: Delear prius — *I shall perish first*. In both the oratory and the manuscript, the miniature image of the book is located at the centre of the scene between the alchemist and the cross, which is a symbol of the crucible.

However let us return to our first engraving which is incredibly figurative and powerfully illustrative. Our deceased friend Philéas Lebesque, who was an alchemist of the word, has provided a precise definition of its poetical meaning in 1911 when he quite strikingly anticipated the central idea of future surrealism:

'The art that I envision could be loved by the masses, like cathedrals

once were and like music still is in some places, because it is able to follow the different beats of the human heart. It leaps away from the incessant pressure that aims to domesticate all energies on our planet. It is curious, passionate, daring, filled with enthusiasm and challenges any definitive crystallization.'[41]

We find our protagonist asleep on his hard stone bed. Following the example of the Masters who declare again and again that mercury is the architect of their work, Magophon states that this stone incarnates the primary matter that is the subject of the Work. Moreover, this first commentator of the *Mutus Liber* immediately followed this with the important question: What is this subject? He responds as best as possible, in the manner that is customary of authors in this field:

'Some say it is a body, others say it is a water. Both the former and the latter are right because water, also called 'the silver beauty', sprung forth from the body that the Sages call the Fountain of the Lovers of Wisdom. It is the mysterious mixture of salts — the Lycopodium medicine of the Druids — the material that brings forth salt (from *sel* for *sal* and *agere* produce).' With these noteworthy words,, Pierre de Dujols who was a descendant of the Valois family, succinctly summarized the Physical Truth in one simple phrase and in a manner that is in accordance with the age-old tradition as Fulcanelli did using more words a few years later. We, too, will apply ourselves to this as well. 'As far as we are concerned,' Magophon continues on the fourth page of his *Hypotyposis*, 'we are confident that he who succeeds to open the rock with the staff of Moses has found the first operative key.'

On the same subject, we can state without circumlocution that there is a mineral that is particularly suited to bring about this miracle.

It is important for disciples to nonetheless remain cautious at this stage. The admonishing as so formidably put forward by Fulcanelli in over almost five pages on this very subject may just be a way to eliminate the benefit of a solid, certain and easy-to-acquire base for those undeserving of understanding. It is worthwhile to read and analyse the long passage in the chapter dedicated to Louis d'Estissac. This passage comes to a curious ending with the following short

qabalistic commentary:

> 'Written with the episemon, Ϛίμμι, *stimmi*, is no longer the stibine of mineralogists but indeed a *matter signed by nature*, or still better, a movement, an energy or a vibration, a *sealed life* (Ϛ-ἴμμεναι) so as to allow man to identify it, a very peculiar signature subject to the ordination of the number *six*.'[42]

In fact, a specific initial operation is required which justifies the concluding argument and correction of our Master who thereby changed vulgar antimony into philosophic antimony and converted lead into the Saturn of the Sages. It would be wise to recall Dujols' words once again, although in pointing this out we ourselves almost commit the reprehensible act of divulging too much.

We nonetheless insist on pursuing the subject. What chemistry is lacking compared to alchemy — that is, what is lacking from the proud and soulless analysis of the former compared with the humble and living synthesis of the latter — is the constant exchange with the *universal*, the repeated cohobation of the spirit on the material. The wise Altus represented this on the first page of his book with the rise and fall of the two angels between heaven and earth, on the *ladder of the philosophers*. These are repeated sublimations under the sky of the sages, a topic which we will return to later. The number of sublimations is marked in the image by the ten beautiful stars in the night sky.

Assuredly the Adept was referring to Jacob's famous dream in order to draw the attention of novices to the important role of dew[43] in the Work of the Sages. On this same subject we previously stated, among other things, that the letters and numbers to the left under the Latin title must be read backwards. For an explanation on this, the reader will benefit from consulting our previous work.[44]

Alas, we must acknowledge the following. Even in a state of wakefulness, despite all appearances, man is normally so deep asleep that the repeated blasts on the trumpets by the angels of heaven are not enough to awaken him to the true vision of things on earth. The

image can also be interpreted from another point of view: in the operative domain, the subject of the Art and our mineral of choice is in a state of stupor that borders on death. Our subject must undergo a violent impact of *vibrations* which is symbolized most fittingly by the calls, the clamour and the piercing sounds of brass instruments.

Likewise, Altus' sleeping man will awaken to the sound of the trumpets in the same way that Sethon, at the end of the first part of his *Parable*, awakens to the powerful shout of the god Saturn:

> 'He (Saturn) began to cry out in such a loud voice that I awoke me from my sleep, and for that reason I could not further question him.'
>
> *At ille sublata voce clamavit, ut me è somno excitaret ideò non ampliùs poteram quaerere.*[45]

At the beginning of his treatise, an anonymous Adept informs us of the allegorical dream that he was fortunate enough to experience in 'the year of our Lord one thousand five hundred eighty-eight of the reign of Henry the Third, king of France and Pollongne, on the twelfth day of the month of May, when everyone revolted and took up arms in the city of Paris — a perilous situation which I found myself in the middle of with my whole family.' He tells us about the double nature of a very characteristic trumpet which is both igneous and vitreous, that is to say, *saline*. Being not without the necessary qabalistic play on words between *verre* [glass] and *vert* [green], both words are pronounced the same in French. The latter also signifies the colour of the energy of this vibration as highlighted by Fulcanelli:

'I saw a man enter wearing a black capette who had in his right hand a flame of fire and in his left a *glass trumpet* (trompette de verre) ... and immediately after entering, he threw the flame of fire to the ground and then started to play his trumpet loudly.'[46] 'This Word comes from God, carried by the angels, messengers of fire,' Magophon confirms, rightfully recalling that the Great Work is a veritable *Celestial Agriculture*. We can add that this is much more than just labour in the fields as it will always remain subject to the weather

and, in particular, to the sovereign influence of the moon. Could this be the domain of Dujol's 'serious misinterpretation'?

It is certainly hard for us to believe that spiritual activity can be started and maintained when the moon is in its last quarter. This is why we are inclined to believe that it is the crescent moon in the top right corner of the engraving that constitutes the error of the 'profane artist' who is guilty of not having turned the points of the curve towards the left. For the sake of the *lovers of science*, we must note that this star of the night nonetheless pulls its menstrual waters around it whereas Manget simply put it at the centre of a clearing in the sky, above the clouds.

One other mistake is obvious: that of the change in landscape in which our dreamer rests. Our edition here differs from the later edition in which water is spread out abundantly. In the original edition, there is only land as far as the eye can see. This sudden change from aridity to humidity may also be the philosophical anomaly that Magophon implicitly alludes to:

'Hermetic glosses,' he plainly concludes, 'warn the disciple of the necessity to inquire into the subject himself.'

Was this a compelling reason for the author who was above all an eminent bibliophile, in his erudite *Hypotyposis*, to refrain entirely from commenting on the original edition which appeared in La Rochelle and of which he was undoubtedly aware?

Furthermore, it would be foolish to insist that the Great work can be accomplished in two ways; one being the dry way of the opaque crucible, the other being the humid way that is carried out by use of the transparent flask. Would it be justified to claim that Manget preferred the latter way and that this is the reason why he substituted the principal element on the title page, namely the image of earth for that of water?

It is obvious that it would be unnecessary to insist on this central argument of this science and doctrine since Altus' plates most readily show the unwonted and unique way of The Cosmopolitan. By the sign of Gemini and animals of the zodiac Sendivogius' master has clearly designated the vernal period during which the rays of the moon are to

be captured — *a radiis lunæ trahebatur*. It is the period in which we are to capture the wonderful water which Magaphon called the silver beauty and which, according to The Cosmopolitan, is the province of the nymph Venus in the forest of the Philosophers:

> 'In the same place passed the bulls and the rams, and there were two young farmers which the alchemist questioned.'[47]

This pontic water is the *Air*, or R, as symbolized by the unusual enjambment of the long title phrase where the R stands rejected at the right of the ladder. This enjambment was obviously meant to stir the curiosity of those inquiring into our art. It underlines how well versed alchemists were in their qabalistic acrobatics as comprised by their secret language in which meaning may be found by reading beyond the ordinary pronunciation and towards close phonetic equivalents. It is therefore not without reason that our Adept from Rochelle set the following five words of the first line in capital letters:

MUTUS LIBE R IN QUO TAMEN

Interpreting inquo as inquio, from this we may resolve the following anagrammatic rebus:

SUM BETULI R IN QUO TAMEN:

I am the air of betyle, I speak nevertheless.

According to the old authors, the air is mercury. The word *betyle* [also *baetylus*, *bethel* or *betyl*] according to Altus would correspond to the *bethel of Jacob*, that is to say, in Hebrew, the house of God [*beth-'el*].

'And he was afraid, and said, How awe-inspiring is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven — *Pavensque: Quàm terribilis est, inquit, locus iste! Non est hîc aliud nisi domus Dei, & porta cœli*.' (*Genesis*, XXVIII,17.)

The betyle corresponds with the black stone that fell from the sky

and that was swallowed by Saturn. It possessed the virtues of divination and of an oracle. Among the fifty emblems that Johann Theodor de Bry so richly engraved for Michael Maier's *Atalanta Fugiens* (1618), two emblems are found in which this stone can be identified in its crude state at first and its refined and sculpted state later, namely on the emblems XII and XXXVI.

Commentary to the Second Plate

Clearly Pierre Dujols is right when he remarks in his commentary that this image, that of the *second plate*, is not in its proper place. Many of the images following this *second plate* should precede it, up until the *eighth*, which closely resembles it. The second plate therefore precedes this *eighth plate* and its allegory of the central phase of the work in which Neptune protects the sun and the moon in their infancy. Neptune thereby brings them close to one another so that their union may generate philosophic mercury. It is an inevitable law of nature that generation, from start to finish, always takes place within water and in a completely closed and dark place.

In obstetrics, do we not designate with the simple term waters the fluids in which the human foetus is immersed? Michael Maier does not hesitate to show us, in his XXXIV figure, the copulation of the Sun and the Moon of the Sages in the pure water of a cavern while adding, with regard to the philosophic child, that *it is conceived in the baths* — in balneis concipitur.[48]

These two noble luminaries of the alchemical microcosm are represented here by the handsome Apollo and the chaste Diana; that is, by the sun and the moon. On an operative level, these must not be confused with gold and silver, the most precious among the seven metals. These metals remain in the grip of the death that they experienced when they were industrially processed, whereas the couple presented to us by Altus, young and divine, reunite the two powerful living sovereigns of the philosophic universe.[49] They were borne into this philosophic universe together, to live and to reign there forever like the two great celestial bodies of the cosmos within the immense sphere that delimits the blanket of stars. The egg of the world around which the celestial bodies gravitate is the perfect model of the Flask of the Wise within which the planets pass in regimens, in the same order as in Ptolemy's system.

The *Journal des Sçavans* of August 1677 states that these two precious metals are fermented and opened within this egg 'by

saltpetre extracted from common salt, which is very fixed, and which is represented by a dolphin, from which Neptune rises. This volatile nitrous substance, which is the universal Agent of the Philosophers and which contains their salt, their sulphur and their mercury, is heated by the soft and humid warmth of the vapour bath. This bath is heated by a lamp, as we see on the bottom of this same plate.'

This interpretation is a little too spagyric for our liking. One must be aware that the mineral of which we and Fulcanelli often speak is the chaos necessary for the creation of the small alchemical world. It is nothing other than the body that is opened by the iron and crucified by the nails: nothing other than the salt that arouses passions, both stimulating and calming these passions. Nothing else except this salt is of use in the Great Work. Nothing else is introduced in the preparation of the compost and less so remains there. From this chaos, the artist extracts light, like the biblical God, on the first day of Creation, during the extraordinary week that Moses described in his book of *Genesis*:

> 'And God said: 'Let there be light,' and there was light.
> God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.'[50]

The primordial light is reflected by the mercury of the philosophers which we may recognize, in our book's emblem, as the person of Neptune sitting on the rocky and moving mass of the island of Delos. The god of the seas made the island come forth from the blows of his trident, and it now emerges, carried by the dolphin swimming on the surface of the waters. On top of these waters, in their youthfulness, the sun and the moon arise as the future parents of our chemical child.

Alexandre Sethon identified the Mirror of Nature with the sea god who, in a second dream once again appeared to the alchemist and led him to an island more beautiful than the Champs Elysées. This is what the Adept, who is better known by the name of The Cosmopolitan, expressed in *The Parable or the philosophical Enigma which follows, that is included here to complete and crown the book*; sequitur Parabola seu AEnigma philosophicum, coronidis & super additamenti loco adiunctum:

> ‘He congratulated himself on the happiness present in the Garden of the Hesperides by showing me a mirror, in which I saw all of nature uncovered.’[51]

That which was hidden is shown and becomes visible, as revealed by the word *Delos*, Δέλος, the name of the island that allowed for the birth and protection of Apollo as well as Diana. Diana at the time was called *Artemis*, *Artemis*, from Αρτεμης and *artemes*, meaning *healthy* and *safe*. For those who are not convinced that our philosophical island can remain afloat, we remind them of the reproach from Jesus to Peter — the same message that an unknown Adept of Dampierre-sur-Boutonne inscribed as a caption to one of the sculptures of his admirable ceiling. There we see a cubic stone floating on the calm waters:

MODICE. FIDEI. QUARE. DUBITASTI.

Why have you doubted, man of little faith?

‘It is from this stout faith,’ Fulcanelli writes, ‘that the wise worker will obtain the virtues indispensable for the solution of this great mystery. Calling it a ‘great mystery’ is not an exaggeration: we indeed find ourselves before a real mystery, as much by its development contrary to chemical laws, as by its obscure mechanism. It presents a mystery which the most learned scholar and the most expert alchemist are unable to explain. For it is true that nature in her simplicity seems to delight in presenting enigmas before which our logic recoils, our reason gets confused, and our judgement is misled.’[52]

As the only student of this last Adept and as a Brother Knight of Heliopolis we were a frequent witness to, and later a seasoned practitioner of, the operational stage that we are examining here. On the basis of this experience we would like to emphasize that the island of Delos is a refuge whose mythological origin within the ocean is a perfect example of the physico-chemical phenomenon that elevates the sulphurous and igneous matter of the earthy magma below the

surface through the mercurial solvent and which causes it to harden when it reaches the surface.

This is the elevation of the spirit; or rather, of *philosophic gold*. According to Morien, 'the Rising Dawn (...) clearly signifies (ex hoc patet) that this gold is not common gold; neither in colour nor in substance.' — *quòd aurum philosophicum non est aurum vulgi, nec in colore nec in substancia*.[53]

This stage is symbolized by the sun and the angels standing on the shore of the convex ocean of mercury. It involves numerous manipulations, all of which are delicate, laborious and painful. This stage provides the artist with the opportunity to prove his courage and tenacity. During these tiresome repetitions it is more important to persevere through pain and effort than it is to continue with invocations and prayers. The old adage continues to be the principal proverb that the philosopher must continue to obey:

'God helps those who help themselves.'

Prayer alone is not enough. Yet if it precedes or accompanies action then the desired result can surpass all expectations. Jacob Sulat tried to depict this basic tenet by portraying the alchemist and his female companion beneath the hieroglyph for elaboration, on their knees and praying on each side of the peacefully *rotating* athanor.

Likewise, Henri Khunrath, on the first plate of his *Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom* — Amphitheatrum Eternae Sapientiae — depicts himself absorbed in prayer and kneeling before the altar built in front of his oven.

Moreover, Magophon ends the passage that he dedicates to the *second plate* of Altus' beautiful album in a way pertinent to our discussion:

> 'The prayer of the artist is rather the work itself, often hard, dangerous and not for those with delicate hands. Remember therefore to focus on the *improbus labor*.'

For Pierre Dujols, the most important prerequisite was to use the

proper materials and not to fall into the trap of the Kermes oak[54] which he recognized growing on the rock of the title page. Although the design in both Altus' and Manget's versions does not indisputably point towards the dwarf oak that is typical of the south, it is tempting to assume that it is indeed a *Kermes* oak because of its association with antimony. We will try to clarify the ambiguity surrounding antimony in our comments on the *first* and *seventh figures*.

Commentary to the Third Plate

The *third plate* provides a number of details that are complementary to those of the previous plate. This time the design of the image is circular. It presents concentric circles on top of a bubbling immensity of waves — which in Manget's version have been uniformly converted into clouds. The circles are situated between the sun and the moon and are placed under the powerful aegis of Jupiter who is seated on his *Eagle*. The crested head of this eagle resembles that of the *Phoenix*. The master of the gods is positioned at the top, within the Empyreum that the Genevan doctor identified as the shadows of the Cimmerians. In his version, these are halfway down the page, at the same level as the sun and moon, which each light up the earth in turn.

With reference to the two great celestial bodies and their invaluable virtues that sustain life on earth, Alexandre Sethon, who is also called The Cosmopolitan, vituperates the inconceivable weakness of mankind; of whom the majority goes from carelessness acquired by habit, to oblivion gradually brought about by subjection:

> 'In this sacred and very true science, the man for whom the sun does not shine remains in the nocturnal darkness. Those for whom the moon does not appear at night, they are in the dark of shadows.'[55]

Overall, the composition of this plate illustrates what Dujols mentions in his *Hypotyposis* where he explains that the symbols established by Altus are described in a similar way in Eirenæus Philalethes' major treatise. Since we are of the impression that The Cosmopolitan has indeed been an important influence in Altus' work, we must recognize that this observation is not without merit, as is the nuance that immediately follows it:

'It's not that there is nothing left to add. On the contrary, far from that. The patronage of Philalethes, presented to us under the guise of friendliness and persuasiveness, comes in one of the most subtle and

treacherous pieces of fiction in Hermetic literature. It does contain the truth but in the way that poison sometimes contains its antidote, if you know how to isolate it from its harmful alkaloids.'

Magophon promised to identify these pitfalls and stumbling blocks in the course of his annotations but we have found no evidence that he altogether kept his promise. In this respect our readers will undoubtedly be pleased to read the words of the anonymous Philosopher of the *Regime of Jupiter* — de Regimine Jovis — in which Jupiter appears in a similar context as the present paradigm:

> 'Black Saturn is succeeded by Jupiter, who exhibits divers colours. For after the inevitable putrefaction and conception, which has taken place at the bottom of the vessel, there is once more a change of colours and a circulating sublimation. This reign or regimen lasts only three weeks. During this period you will see all conceivable colours of which no definite account can be given. The "showers" that fall will become more numerous as the close of this reign approaches, and in the end, after all these changes, a very beautiful whiteness will be offered to behold, resembling strings or hairs on the side of the vase.'[56]

For alchemists who have experience with the dry way by use of furnace and who moreover have sufficient theoretical knowledge, it will be easy to recognize the intentional mix-up in Philalethes' exposition of the two ways; the humid and the dry way. The time frame of twenty-one days may seem rather short in comparison to the time required by way of the flask, yet anyone who has worked through the stage described in Sulat's *second* and *third plates* will confirm our assertion that this series of operations, although very lengthy, does not require much more than one week for two kilograms of material used.

The furnace must be quite hot so that the three parts of the mixture which occupy the space between the outer circle and the second circle are able to react with one another. At the top one may recognize Juno by her wedding veil, reminiscent of her role as persecutrix of Latona.

She points her index finger at the flight of the ten birds that come from the *eleventh engraving*. These ten birds bring to mind Philalethes' famous *eagles* that symbolise sublimation. The English Adept offers the following encouragement to the neophyte with regard to the work that follows putrefaction in the dry way of the crucible, namely the stage of the crow and the colour black:

> 'Rejoice, then, for you have successfully accomplished the regimen of Jupiter.
> Make sure to be particularly careful in this operation to prevent the young ones of the Crow from going back into the nest after they have left it.
> Secondly, be careful not to drive off an excessive amount of moisture, so that the remaining earth does not lack water and is not left on the bottom, arid and useless.
> Third, stake care not to water the earth so excessively that you entirely suffocate it. A proper regulation of external heat will protect you against these mistakes.'[57]

Next to Jupiter's wife, a peacock — often shown as her attribute — spreads its tail [in French *roue* — wheel] and shows the marvellous colours of its train, replicating those of our glass in perfect fusion. This phenomenon of the Work is like a meteor in the Sky of the Sages. The ancient authors called it the *peacock's tail* in light of its semblance to the oscillating iridescence of this aristocratic bird.[58] Similarly, in the crucible of the dry way, the dyed links of the circular net flare up, uniquely illuminated from below like the *great rose* of a cathedral [also called a *rota*; a wheel, in French *la roue*] as it is set alight by the setting sun.

This is the subtle net that our Master, following the example of the ancient philosophers, advises us 'to catch the product with as it appears.'[59]

This fishing instrument is also called a *casting net*[60] and is worth a closer look. We see a woman with a naked torso who dips her right hand into the water while holding the indispensable lantern on her knees with her left hand. She looks at a man who sits on the ground

like her. By raising his index finger he signals that a single fish suffices, showing her the simple line that he has cast out to catch it.

A siren moves with grace as it swims on a black wave. To understand the meaning of this siren it is worthwhile to return to the explanation that Fulcanelli provided us with on the symbolic relation between this hybrid being and the difficult and monotonous second stage of the great work:

'So, the *siren*, the mythical monster and Hermetic symbol, characterizes the union of the nascent sulphur, which is our *fish*, and common mercury, called *virgin*, within the philosophic mercury or the *Salt of wisdom*.'[61]

The Hermetic fish is often depicted as a dolphin. In our image, the pair of alchemists were able to capture it with the hook from a ship pulled and guided by Neptune himself. At the same time, Neptune points the *three iron points*[62] of his trident at two fisherman who appear to be in deep discussion, trying to reach an agreement.

Above the central scene we see a charming creature as an admiring witness, solitary yet elegant even in her very simple dress. On behalf of the fishermen, she looks after the two bouquets that are meant for the future preparation of the royal cetacean. Since they are presented in a flower pot, one could imagine that these flowers display various colours. They seem to be artificial flowers and are presented as six in number with an additional black one that holds them all together. The flowers signify the planets as well as the metals. Only five of these metals are likely to attain perfection. Proceeding from the barren earth on a single powerful stalk, five of these flowers open their corollas in the presence of the seductive maiden.

An important question which we have had to answer many a time, relates to the significance of the oft returning presence of the ram and the bull in the iconography of Altus. Here, they are represented for the first time in the second ring as formed by the three concentric circles. Pierre Dujols did not hesitate to present an opinion on the meaning of these animals, a statement we will discuss with the following image. We must, however, forewarn the reader against the decidedly evident contradiction in his claim.

In relation to the problem of interpreting this image one could ask: who is aware that clouds come from condensation (water vapor) of the currents that traverse the atmosphere as well as from the reduction (by heat) thereof? This is a phenomenon that is a result of the unrestricted interplay between the sun and the moon. It is important not to disturb this interplay in an attempt to bring about an augmentation or diminution in one sense or another. Alchemy reveals, moreover, that a significant disturbance of the magnetic fluid is harmful to the small sun in the centre of the chemical being and, similarly, that the same atmospheric disruption may pose a grave danger to the heart of a human being. Alchemy also demonstrates that clouds may block the descent of the cosmic spirit on earth, especially when these clouds spread a thick cover over the entire firmament. The same applies to the formation of dew according to an opuscule in which an author avowedly records his experiences and observations as follows:

'If, over the course of one night, the calm and serene weather becomes windy and cloudy, not only will dew cease to be produced, but also the dew which had previously formed will either disappear or greatly decrease in volume.'63

Commentary to the Fourth Plate

The *fourth engraving* unveils what is, without doubt, one of the greatest mysteries of the physical work.

The cosmic influx descends from the centre of the sky at a point located between the sun and the moon and then fans out in an array of alternately hatched and dotted straight beams.

No author has ever so strikingly depicted the principle forces of movement and transformation that occur on the earth's surface as well as in the centre of the earth. The intervention of this cosmic force is what sets alchemy apart from chemistry as its proud empirical parallel. It is undoubtedly for good reason that this secret is deemed to be so important that Magophon takes such pains to hide it. He did, however, include the following, nonetheless very significant, lines in his writings:

'Without the assistance of Heaven, the work of man is useless. One does not prune trees or sow seeds in every season, there is a time for everything. The Philosophical work is called Celestial Agriculture for good reason. One of the greatest authors signed his writings with the name of Agricola, and two other excellent adepts were known by the name of the Great Farmer and the Small Farmer.' The ram and the bull in the image of our current analysis correspond to two signs of the zodiac. These two signs signify the months in spring during which one must accomplish the operation that aims to harvest the *Flower of the Sky*, exactly as it is depicted here.

In the footsteps of the old masters, Pierre Dujols did not hesitate to show himself equally *envious*, dragging the reader along a long tirade which he himself qualified as a logomachy, directly after the following ambiguous statement:

'We must add, in all honesty, that the Ram and the Bull of the plate, which were always considered to be the signs of the Zodiac under which one must collect the *flos cœli*, have no connection with the astrological symbols.'

It is plain to see that it is indeed dew and not something else that

the wise Jacob Sulat suggests to harvest. It would be futile to philosophize too subtly over a figure of such innocent sincerity on the assumption that it constitutes an obscure allegory. This is, without obscuration, the plain and simple way we ourselves at first carried out the work less than half a century ago. The only difference between then and now lies in the pieces of fabric set up on posts. This system might find its roots in the dryness of the terrain in Altus' landscape since, according to an English doctor, all substances placed above the ground 'will acquire more dew during a very calm night than a similar substance placed on the grass.'[64]

For quite a while now we have carried out the work differently. We take a linen cloth which has previously been carefully rinsed in rain water a number of times and drag it over green grains, over clover, over lucerne and honeysuckle. It is important that no lye or bleaching salts whatsoever dissolve into the generous liquid that is soaked up. Likewise, we must ensure that the plants carrying the dew have not been sprayed or contaminated with any fertilizers by any chance.

Then comes the banal work of wringing the saturated cloth to squeeze out and collect the dew. The man and woman we saw praying on the *second plate* here carry out this work. Around the operators the sun is out and, in Manget's version, the sun nourishes the plants with their large leaves that lie flat against and spread across the earth. It is tempting to think that these plants, flattened into strange puddles, represent the *nostoc* which so often is a subject of discussion in alchemy. This *nostoc* used to be so easy to find but this was before the disruption of nature that made it all but disappear. It concerns an algae that has been designated by many popular expressions — *vox populi, vox Dei* — such as *magic butter, spit of the moon, fat of dew, flower of the sky, foam of spring*, etc. Speaking of this algae, let us cite Fulcanelli's observations about the quatrefoils at the Porch of the Virgin in the Cathedral of Amiens, even thought they may not have been his exact sentiments regarding the matter:

> 'I believe this is the place to rectify certain errors which have been made concerning a symbolical vegetable matter, which, when taken literally by ignorant puffers, has greatly

> contributed to the discredit of alchemy and the ridicule brought upon its adherents. I would like to speak here of *nostoc*. This cryptogam, which peasants know well, is found everywhere in the country; sometimes on the grass, sometimes on bare earth, in fields, beside paths, or at the edge of woods. In the early morning in spring, you will find them in great number, swollen with the nocturnal dew. These plants, which are jelly-like and trembling — hence the French name *trémelles* — are usually greenish and dry up so rapidly under the action of the sun's rays that it is impossible to find any trace of them, even on the very same spot where they had appeared a few hours before.'[65]

We have said it before and will repeat it again: the author of the *Mutus Liber* has shown great charity and sincerity in the revelations provided by the images. Is it possible that anyone has ever so clearly expressed the source and the nature of the cosmic and universal agent which the ancient alchemists declared to be their raw material?

It is true that the small bas-relief at the Notre-Dame of Picardy[66] offers the same fluidic and torrential cascade as that found in Altus' engraving. However, it is different in that the medieval alchemist appears alone and raptured with ecstasy whereas the couple in our *Mute Book* are completely occupied with their work. It would most certainly be of interest for the reader to compare the photograph that is included in the first book of the Master with the scene as shown in the present *fourth plate*.

The Adept Fulcanelli underlined that authors and philosophers used the term nostoc by way of analogy so that they could speak more freely about the mineral subject of their philosophical work. This made it possible for them, without risk of perjury, to present their *magnesium* (which absorbs the universal spirit just like the *magnet* attracts *iron*, that is to say the *green*) from the qabalistic point of view.[67] Eirenæus Philalethes does not think differently as is evident from his outbursts and imprecations against spagyrists and his mocking of those who use the water that has fallen directly from the sky:

Go on babbling about your rain water collected in May, your Salts, ... know that I am afflicted with sadness by your ridiculous discourse![68]

It is evident from the following that the reputed author of *Introitus* alludes to the same mysterious body as Fulcanelli. Philalethes was the first to designate it as being similar to the *magnes*:

'Just as Steel is attracted towards the Magnet, and the Magnet spontaneously turns towards Steel, so also our Magnet of the sages attracts their Steel.'[69]

A more abstruse quote from Cyrano de Bergerac highlights, through allegory, the virtue of sublimation that is contained within dew. With a mind filled with a thousand definitions of moon 'that he could not express,' this philosopher who lived a reclusive life in a remote country house proceeds with the following curious endeavour:

'I planted my self in the middle of a great many Phials filled with Dew, tied fast about me upon which the Sun so violently darted his Rays, that the Heat, which attracted them, as it does the thickest Clouds, carried me up so high, that at length I found my self above the highest clouds.'
(The States and Empires of the Moon)

Under the influence of a carefully applied heat, due to its subtle nitre, dew rises and ennobles any salt. It ennobles in particular those salts which nature has reserved for the Great Work. In combination with this salt flux, the nocturnal condensation undergoes the action of the fire easily and without damage. This is the untold reason why the members of the *Rose-Croix* (Rosicrucians) called themselves the brothers of the *Rosée-Cuite* [cooked dew].[70]

Most relevant in this respect is the following passage taken from the *Journal des SÃ§avans*. The author contemplates the nature of celestial dew, impregnated with fixed fire and solar salt, and thereby clearly demonstrates to posses knowledge far beyond the ordinary:

'When this solar salt, which is nothing but a very refined nitre, is

concentrated and petrified by skilful preparation, it imbibes the light and becomes a small artificial sun. Perhaps this is the perpetual fire of the Urns of the Ancients, so famous in antiquity and so sought out today ... This same salt duly dissolved in liquor becomes the Alkahest or universal solvent that was kept secret by the masters of the Art. Experience also shows that this volatile salt from the dew of May dissolves gold as easily as hot water dissolves ice.'

On 'the 12th of August 1732', in the solitude of Sonnenstein, the anonymous Adept and author of the *Mystery of the Cross* states the following at the end of his *Small Sacred Garden — Hortulus Sacer* — about the three non-vulgar Medicines — *Triplex Medicina non Vulgaris*. The green Sophic one of the air gives the first which, contained within itself, has its fire — *Dat primam Sophicum viride æris ... In se prima suos ignes habet* — the second attracts the virtues of the sky to it, like a magnet — *altera virtutes Cœli, magnetis adinstar attrahit* — and as for the *third*:

> 'And from the Heavens and from the Earth the forces comes together,
> By watering, with the dew from the Heavens, the salt in the sea.'
>
> *Et Coeli et Terrae conjungit tertia vires:*
> *Æquoreum, Coeli rore, rigando salem.*

The attentive reader may have identified the *Cross of Lorraine* at the tip of the pointed spire protruding from the landscape on the right. It is a symbol of ashes or of the specific saline powder which authors unanimously agree should not be overlooked:

> 'O how precious are these ashes to the sons of the art, and how precious is that which comes from them!'
>
> *O quàm preciosus est cinis iste filiis doctrinae, & quàm preciosum est quod ex eo fit! (Ait Aziratus in Turba Philosophorum.)*

Its outline is more precise on the engraving of Manget, who in

addition positioned it over the circle symbolizing the initial subject.

Commentary to the Fifth Plate

With the *fifth image* we enter the laboratory where we recognize our two dew collectors now pouring their supply from the large bowl of the previous scene into the cucurbit in this scene. The rapid succession in the work conveys the importance of using the liquid while it is still fresh. As for us, in addition we meticulously filter this liquid.

We are witness here to the secret distillation that is illuminated by the depictions of diverse manipulations performed by the untiring couple. They show us that it is for good reason that the distillation apparatus was also designated by the name of rosary [*rosaire*].

We are not afraid to claim an almost perfect knowledge of the classical authors of alchemy and hope that the reader will not mistake this declaration for simple vanity. We do not advance this claim gratuitously but rather to make the reader aware of our strong desire to avoid as much as possible, for the benefit all students of the art, the intricacies of the language in ancient treatises, which we, ourselves, spent so much time learning to understand.

We know all too well how easy it would be to give an extensive and brilliant exposition about the drawings of the *Mutus Liber* on the basis of the old treatises. This would be particularly easy because the majority of those texts are related to the operations of the *humid way*. This humid way is the one the good authors all preferred to describe in order to hide, by its apparent similarity, the *dry way*. The dry way, however, is the method they all used in the elaboration of the Stone in the laboratory.

This reflects the sentiments of Eirenæus Philalethes. In his famous treatise *The Open Door to the Closed Palace of the King*, he contemplates the two modus operandi, *humid* and *dry*, and compares them with each other. He then speaks of the difficulties of the first and his decision not to discern it from the second:

> ‘But this way is strewn with a thousand thorns and we promised God and country that we would never distinctly

differentiate one regime from the other openly with words.'[71]

The operation is completed using a fire which we deem to be quite hot in view of the flames that come out of its register. The two operators ready themselves, one to take the lid off of the still, the other to remove the recipient which is filled with liquid for four-fifths of the flask. These are proportions that the student or future practitioner, if he is not one already, must abide by strictly. Perhaps the student will be thankful for this guideline — foremost to the generous Altus and then to us.

By removing the lid, the distillation is interrupted precisely at the moment when the most delicate fraction is about to flow into the receptacle. The woman takes this part out of the cucurbit with a spoon. She then pours it into a short-necked bottle. The bottle is transparent and thus allows the reader to see four coagulated particles inside. After the woman has poured the entire fraction into the flask she gives the flask to a naked athletic man who is standing off-balance with his right foot on a small step. In Altus' eyes this was a good way to represent Vulcan, who was commonly known to have a limp. Was it not the unfortunate husband of Venus who received the bottle from her, whilst he holds a lifeless child to his chest?

It would be a grave mistake to believe that this man had any intent to harm the child. Quite the opposite is true as later we will see that he will try to reanimate it. The symbolism of the massacre of the innocents might seem harsh nowadays because, in our time, genuine sensitivity has given way to foolish sentimentalism — a time when, by the way, human life is of as little value as it has ever been. In any case, it should be noted that the massacre of the innocents does not occur at the beginning of the Great Work.

Vulcan, as God of fire and of the metallurgic arts, is the emblem of the most secret agent in the Great Work. It is an emblem of the fiery water which Nicolas Flamel in particular used for his 'washings'. That is why Vulcan's left breast shows a crescent moon. The crescent moon is also shown in silver on a plain gules [red] field of a coat of arms placed nearby.

This is indeed a very important detail which shows that Jacob Sulat

was familiar with the treatise, small in volume but great in wisdom, called *The Ancient War of the Knights*, or *Nurture of the Philosopher's Stone, With Gold and Mercury*. This was prior to the editing by Toussaint Limojon de Saint-Didier which resulted in what is probably the best edition, expanded and paraphrased, in *The Dialogue of Eudoxe and Pyrophile* as well as in his *Letter to the True Disciples of Hermes*.[72] In Altus' time, there were already two translations in circulation, a Latin one and a French one. Both translations are of mediocre quality, to be honest, when compared with the original German edition, published in Leipzig in 1604.

This is how the author of the *Mute Book*, on his way to becoming and Adept, must have come across *The Lunar Vulcan* and so he discreetly *marked* the character in the image with the meniscus of the horizontally-positioned star, like the arch of alliance. This lunar fire is discussed in detail in *Dialogue Between Mercury and Gold*, which entirely relates to the eminent motif which triggered and enflamed all wars of ancient Chivalry.

At this point our reader has an advantage over Jacob Sulat because, when it comes to the identification of this *watery fire*, this *fire water*, or, better put, this *secret fire*, the reader has at his disposal the invaluable indications given in the commentaries of Limojon de Saint-Didier. From his commentary we have taken the following short yet profound quote:

> 'All that you may reasonably expect of me, is to tell you that the natural fire, which this philosopher speaks of, is a fire in potentiality. It does not burn the hands but comes to life as soon as it is kindled by the external fire. It is therefore truly a secret fire to which this Author refers in the title of his writings as the *Lunar Vulcan*.'[73]

Like Altus and many others this sir from *Saint-Didier* signed his book with an anagram: DIVES SICUT ARDENS S; *rich like fire* — SANCTUS DESIDERIUS. One must be on guard that Altus interwove the two paths of the wet and the dry ways in the same manner as Eirenæus Philalethes did. Nevertheless, Altus made it appear like his album is

entirely devoted to the dry way, especially when considering the amount of time he spends on the philosophical preparation of saline additives. This is a phase of the work that requires many precautions and is preliminary to the actual work. Just like the wet way, it requires the same glass equipment that the characters in the plates use before our very eyes. Here the transcendent quality of Altus' iconography becomes evident in that it resolutely attempts to demonstrate, from start to finish, the particular phase of the Great Work which is censored or omitted by almost all authors.

Let us continue our study and point out that the contents of the basin are distributed over four small vessels which are subsequently stoppered, before being put in an instrument designed for slow digestion. This requires forty days, in accordance with the number written in black just above the ashtray. With regard to this operation, it is advisable to take note of and follow Philalethes' advice on the control of the fire:

The regulation of the fire is a matter of great importance at this juncture. I assure you under oath, if you make it too fierce, and thus cause sublimation at this stage, everything will be irrecoverably spoilt. Be content, therefore, to remain, as it were, in prison for forty days and nights, even as was the good Trévisan, and employ only gentle heat. Let your delicate substance remain at the bottom, which is the womb of conception.[74]

Commentary to the Sixt Plate

'The *sixth plate* is the continuation of the *fifth* says Magophon. In stating this he is as right as he is when he points out that 'the operations are always performed by a man and a woman, symbolizing the two natures.'.

This is congruent with our point of view and it is confirmed by a rather striking fact: the couple performing the manipulations show a change in outfit each time they start a new manipulation and, in addition, they do not always seem to be the same two individuals. Of course both of them still represent the alchemist and his faithful companion but their transformation is congruent with changes that the two mineral protagonists undergo during the long labour.

There is no doubt that Sulat was well acquainted with the way of the crucible even though the earthen vessel is not present in any of his fifteen engravings. Anyone who has thoroughly studied hermetic literature and its particular language will have noticed that no author, even the most renowned, has ever presented the Great Work in its entirety in sequential order. Therefore we consider ourselves fortunate to have access to that part of the philosophical work described by Altus — a part no one before him has described in such detail.

In order to justly appreciate what we owe him, it suffices to say that it is thanks to the Mutus Liber, in earnest, that after ten years of unremitting effort — indeed made only during the equinoctial season — we eventually succeeded in isolating the eminently volatile salt of dew. Our gratitude for the decisive help that Altus provided, in combination with our own desire to perpetuate the same charitable spirit and aid to others this way, gave rise to the idea of commenting on his album. Our comments are meant for all brothers involved in the *Celestial Agriculture*.

However, be forewarned that the undertaking is far from easy and requires, above all else, courage and patience. It is important to bear in mind that Altus elucidated subsequent operations only in more general terms and in such a manner that it is only by way of

experimentation that the artist may hope to gain an idea of the lacuna that needs to be filled, as well as the way in which to reorder the plates and discover which incoherent elements need to be removed.

The elaborate kiln is the first object that catches the eye in this plate. Upon closer inspection our attention is drawn to the stoppers for the two pairs of round-bottom flasks in front of this kiln. Previously it was the beakless cucurbit shape and now, as far as these stoppers is concerned, it is their way of levitating that is meant to inspire a certain fertile reflection in the reader. Closed in this way, the cylindrical vessel allows for a slow and sealed circulation of the cohobation which Sulat indicates to be of the utmost importance.

Since the number which had been present above the lower opening has disappeared, we believe that the indicated time period has elapsed. Therefore the digested contents of the four vases must once again have to be gathered in the cucurbit. The couple adjusts the instruments and initiates the phase which quickly bears its fruit in a rather unexpected manner, inside the body of the alembic. The corolla with six petals represents this fruit only in potentiality for it is at the heart of a residual magma into which the female operator dips her spoon. Her companion, after having put away the recipient, takes the *rose*[75] that issued forth from the waters and hands it over to the sun god. The similarity of this rose with that of *rosée* [dew] is to be noted as is the fact that both words are practically homonyms of the Greek ‘ΡΩΣΙΣ, *Rosis*, which means *force, vigour and health*.

One could argue against this by pointing out that the nouns *rose* and *rosée* both come from the Latin words *rosa* and *ros*. However, even in Virgil’s language, hermeticism has its proper place. According to Macrobe, *ros*, of which the genitive is *roris* and which means *rosée*, was also the name of a god, *the son of the Air and the Moon*.

One would be inclined to think that Altus matched the two human polarities to their respective substances and activities. The woman who held the *coagulum* from before over the lunar fire, is replaced by the man, who is now holding the *extractum* over the fiercest fire.

Some might be surprised if we were to put forth the theory, in accordance with the imagery of Altus, that a solution which carries a

living base gains a large amount of fixity from the rays of the daily star. Pierre Dujols supports this observation which he formulates in a very accurate comment in the section of his *Hypotypose* which relates to the *third plate*:

> 'Some authors, and not the lesser ones, have asserted that the greatest art in the operation is to capture the rays of the sun, and to imprison them in a flask that is closed with the seal of Hermes. The simplicity of this image has led people to reject the operation as something ridiculous and impossible. And yet it is literally true, in fact the image presents a physical reality. It is quite surprising that one would not have thought of it. This miracle is accomplished in a similar way by the photographer by use of a sensitive plate which is prepared in different ways. In the *Typus Mundi*, published in the 17th century by the Priests of the Society of Jesus, one finds the image of an apparatus which was also described by Tiphaigne de Larroque, by means of which one can catch the Heavenly Fire and fix it. The process could not be more scientific, and we will go as far as to declare that what we reveal here is, if not a great mystery, at least a profound application of practical philosophy.'

Obviously, this is a somewhat simplified representation of the necessity to reserve the appropriate vehicle for the luminous vibration.

> It is certain that Jacob Sulat took the opportunity to educate us in the central part of the dry way. Indeed, one may notice that the god Apollo wears Mars' armour. The relevance of this can not be explained with more authority by anyone other than Fulcanelli where he describes the sculpted coffer [square sunken panel] at Dapierre-sur-Boutonne where the sun casts its lively rays:
>
> 'Nec te, nec sine te — not thee, but nothing without thee. This is an allusion to the *Sun as the Father of the Stone*, in

> accordance with the belief of Hermes and many hermetic philosophers. The symbolic heavenly body is represented in its radiant splendour and takes the place of the *metallic sun*, or *sulphur*, which many artists have believed to be natural gold. That is a serious mistake; all the less excusable because all other authors clearly establish the difference between the Gold of the Sages and the precious metal.'[76]

Following these words from the Master, we could add that Altus exclusively portrays the dry way at this point of the Great Work. It requires the presence of a substrate that is suitable to retain the cosmic spirit. The alchemist has replaced the cucurbit that his wife gave him with a bowl. In this bowl one will undoubtedly have noticed the floweret which now seems to be have been separated from the deposit that could not be distilled. Is it not self-evident therefore to interpret that the glass of the flask itself figuratively took the place of the coagulum which preserves that purest fraction of the philosophic composite? A composite symbolised by the simple flower with its six petals? Should we not thereby understand that, due to fire, the viscous deposit becomes the glassy substance which will then dissolve the alchemic embryo, serve as its shell and as its vessel, and permit its delicate maturation?

'Nevertheless', Fulcanelli adds, 'contrary to the humid way, whose glassware allows for an easy control and an accurate observation, the dry way does not allow the operator to monitor the process at any time in the Work.'[77]

To the left of the god Phoebus, of *sulphur* or the *gold of the sages* — always depicted together as sulphur can never be without mercury — the two artists continue their patient work. The flacon which the woman had given to the *Lunar Vulcan* in the previous engraving is now poured out by her into the cooking vessel under the watchful eyes of the man.

Commentary to the Seventh Plate

The operation that is shown on the upper left part of this seventh plate recombines the product of the two distillations with that of the immediately preceding confortation. The confortation was applied on the cloudy extract that was previously concentrated and animated by the moon's fire. The female operator has overturned the vessel, undoubtedly after it had cooled, above the large plate which we have already seen and to which we will return later. Meanwhile her companion pours out the second part of the preserved distillate from the big flask into a large bowl.

We would like to briefly touch upon the subject of *distillation*. The authors have presented it as one of the most important parts of the Great Work. Their descriptions, however, are often confusing and do not seem to apply to the physical phenomenon suggested by the word. There must therefore surely exist a different meaning that the cabal might help us to discover.

The word 'distil' comes from Greek and is made up of the adverb δίς, *dis*, meaning *twice* and the noun στίλη, *stile*, meaning *a bit, a very small amount*.

Even in the old days the Greeks wrote the word ϛίλη with an *episemon*. The episemon indicated something of particular importance and demanded careful attention. In fact, ἐπισήμον, episemon, means *distinctive mark, sign, that which is marked*.

The hidden meaning of 'distil' and 'distillation' refers in fact to a secret operation which consists of *dropping a very small amount of water onto the ground twice*, one time after the other. In short, the idea is to *imbibe*, to carry out the *imbibitions* or *distillations* that the treatises speak of in order to impregnate the earth which had been sterile up until then, and to soften and lubricate it so that it is made fertile and can sustain its seed.

The still of Altus is quite ordinary. Let us return to the mixture in the basin. This mixture was poured into the empty bowl by use of a funnel and now seems to be homogeneous to the extent that the four

white flakes have entirely dissolved into it. This concerns a common operation that students may appreciate for its benefit in helping to perfect the mixture. This mixture is poured over a second time onto the big plate which is placed over the flames of a strong fire. This fire is too strong to be mistaken for the temperate one that is used in the *bain-marie* operation.

One must always be watchful of the intensity of the heat and of the way the different degrees of heat are portrayed in the images. These differences can be discerned in the same way as other anomalies that we have pointed out earlier. The following passage from *The Rosary of the Philosophers* accurate sums up what should not be forgotten in this respect:

> 'Salts and Alums are not the Stone but they support the Stone. He who has not tasted of the Savour of the Salt shall never come to the desired ferment of ferments, because salt constitutes the most excellent ferment.
> The superior is like the inferior.
> Decoct, recoct and decoct again.
> Dissolve regularly and coagulate endlessly.
> Kill the living and revive the dead.'

And do this seven times over. And then you will really have what you seek, if you know the regime of fire. Mercury and fire suffice.'[78] The stove shown here is known as a *bassine* [a bassine is a stove or brazier consisting of a deep vessel with a circular top] which is often encountered in laboratories. After turning off the stove, the alchemist is able to handle the bowl while his partner — *in ludo parvulorum* — through skimming with a spoon, removes the delicate stroma that congeals at the surface. The best way to get a deeper understanding of this operation is to consult an old chemistry tract that speaks of genuine *cream of tartar*. Genuine *cream of tartar* unfortunately is often confused with that of the pharmacist, in other words, with potassium tartaric acid or potassium ditartrate.

The glass into which the sublimated layer is put in this image seems to be there to protect the product from any unwanted atmospheric

influence. Through the transparent glass we can also see the sign of ammonia in the form of an asterisk. This is an increasingly exact designation of the very secret *sel harmoniac* or universal harmony. A closer examination of the following plate will tell us why the symbol of the crystal is repeated four times. This crystal should not be mistaken for sodium chloride. The *Great Rosary* speaks of this in the following terms:

> Note that all Salts well prepared return to the nature of Salt Armoniac, and the whole secret is in common salt well prepared ...
> *Therefore, he who knows Salt and the Solution thereof, thereby knows the hidden secret of the ancient sages. Therefore, concentrate on Salt and cogitate on nothing else.'*[79]

With the bottom section of the plate, Altus directly proceeds with the dry way. This is indicated by Saturn who is slowly devouring an infant in the midst of the high flames of a brazier. According to Philalethes this baby is the sulphur that *the Mages sought and discovered in the house of Aries* — in domo arietis quaesiverunt Magi — the same sulphur that Saturn's offspring claimed so eagerly. *That is why*, the Adept adds, *like a magnet, Saturn's offspring draws it in, absorbs it and hides it in its belly*.[80]

This is followed by the process of purification. Altus' operator pours out the contents of a large flask, the liquid part that was left over after the skimming, onto the devouring god who is a symbol of the primordial and raw subject.

'This cleansing by the great water,' Magophon observes, 'strips the body of its impurities, corrects its humours, and rends it suitable for the operations to come.'

The innocent which Saturn eats before our eyes is not the only victim. At the same time, the Sons of the Sky and the Earth massacre all those who live under their reign. The image of immolation by the sword, which announces the coming of the baby Jesus, of the divine *fish* or the *Sulphur of the Sages*, can be found as a painting in The Book of Abraham which was attributed to Nicolas Flamel (MS. Fr. Nat. Lib.

nº 14765). The image on vellum in this beautiful manuscript shows us the same banquet, flooded with the blood of babies who have had their throats cut and which the god partakes of with ferocious pleasure. This manuscript also shows the arrival of the Sun and the Moon for a subsequent bath in this blood.

It would be helpful here to go back over the observation made earlier about the first engraving which concerned the very same Saturn, as well as the ambiguity that surrounds this character and its relation to sulphur as symbolized in the context of experimental alchemy. What indeed is this body whose juvenile yet greedy appetite depends on the action of the two major elements, fire and water? *The very ancient philosopher Arthephius* gives us the answer in the first sentence of his *Secret Book*:

> 'Antimony is a mineral participating of saturnine parts and has in all respects the nature thereof. This saturnine antimony agrees with sol, and contains in itself argent vive, in which no metal is swallowed up, except gold.'[81]

To further specify this, however, we would like to share our thoughts regarding the origins of the *sole* ✸, as used in the motto by Nicolas Rollin, the chancellor of Philippe le Bon.[82] We are going to go one step further than the Master himself by examining the two tapestries from the 15th century which can be found at the Hôtel-Dieu in Beaune. These tapestries include a short phrase in the form of a rebus which is placed around Saint Anthony, here presented as a hermit. The anomaly that is found here is so flagrant that it must have been done on purpose. It concerns the replacement of Saint Nicolas, the patron of the opulent minister, by the stoic anchorite of Thebaid. One is easily tempted to separate the noun into two parts: ANT-ONY and insert the two letters that yield the name of the mineral so favoured by a good number of *artists*?

The four reiterations by means of iron and salt yield the Saturn of the Sages, a whiteness and a brilliance normally reserved for the moon and for the virgin Diana who, in this case, is depicted as being compliant by the image of a young woman in full nudity. She holds

the bottle marked with four stars. The bottle is attached to the hilt of a sable. The pommel of this sable is decorated with a bird's head which subtly evokes volatility. The sable itself is evocative of the god Mars as well as the planet and the metal attributed to him.

This constitutes the first work which, in a way, already includes the sublimation of mercury. President Espagnet[83] informs us that this sublimation is 'accomplished in two stages. By removing the superfluous elements from it and by adding what is missing. The superfluous elements are the external elements which cover the radiating Jupiter with the sombre sphere of Saturn. Separate the blackness coming from Saturn until the purple star of Jupiter looks out at you.'[84]

It is evident that Jacob Sulat was influenced by the works of Jean d'Espagnet as well. It was not without reason after all, that the works of d'Espagnet were so well reputed. The President signed his works with two Latin maxims which concealed, by way of anagram, his first and last names. The first was *SPES MEA IN AGNO EST*, *my hope lies in the lamb*; the second, *PENES NOS UNDA TAGI*, *the water of the Tagus is in our hands*. As legend and history has it, the water of this Lusitanian river had the virtue of rolling forth an abundance of alluvial gold particles.

In the second maxim, IOANNES must be read as IONNUS. It is a liberty that an extraordinary Latinist such as the honest magistrate of the Parliament of Bordeaux could allow himself.

Commentary to the Eight Plate

This *eighth plate* is completed or rather expounded upon by the *third plate* which should follow directly after it. It brings together the important parts of the perfect allegory of mercury as so gloriously represented by the two angels. Thus the matter of the Work is personified in the mythological god wearing a strange winged petasus, standing erect with the two hermetic stars at his feet. Enclosed in the philosophical egg and beneath the rays of the cosmic star, he is supernaturally transported into the heart of the external element with which he is particularly familiar with. Indeed, the wind carried it in its belly — *portavit eum ventus in ventre suo*. This was the apophthegm often included by authors to express the volatile character of the environment where philosophic mercury is conceived and developed.

Divided over the left and the right side of the composition we see ten birds in flight which converge towards the hyaloid egg. The birds at the front carry in their beaks a vegetal branch with, on the one hand, the sign of tartar and, on the other, the sign of harmoniac.

This brings us back to the second salt which by way of coagulation is raised to a quadruple level of power. This was illustrated in the preceding image by the two pairs of asterisks and it is further underlined by the image of the moon and her bond with a Saturn — a bond sharpened by iron.

One could easily miss the two spagyric symbols that Altus has dissembled with a care appropriate to their importance. Two requirements must be fulfilled in order to recognize the importance of these symbols. Firstly, one must understand the graphic language and, secondly, one has to be filled with a love for the work that generates the complete patience to examine its every detail. The two spagyric symbols represent the two saline agents which constitute, by themselves, the casing that encloses the substance that came from the sun and the moon.

The force of harmony is in this way incorporated and becomes the *crystal* or *the salt of Christ* (Χριστου, Khristou, *of Christ* and ἁλς, als,

salt). The force of harmony that the cosmos pours forth on the Earth. The leafy twig which is held in the beak of the bird signifies the vegetative nature of this force and its green colour.

IIt is clear that Altus made a point of distinguishing the two salts of the Work as used in the dry way instead of showing them together in the form of the highly illustrative hieroglyph for *philosophic vitriol* which is of a most eminent green. The ancient notation of the glyph resembles a simplified drawing of a key. In alchemy, any dissolvent or menstruum is called a key and in this context the Vitriol of the Sages, which is basically an alkali, is and always will be the true *alkahest*.[85]

Alas! Who has not heard the absurd fable about the mysterious agent of radical dissolution? It is said that it was sought out as the *universal dissolvent*,, that is to say, a dissolvent for all things on Earth. After Johannes Kunckel, whose remark in jest continues to damage the reputation of alchemy,[86] people of keen intellect have not failed to ridicule the simplistic reasoning by pointing out that the universality of the prestigious liquid would have prohibited containment within any kind of flask as it would immediately disintegrate the flask.

As mentioned earlier, one should not confuse the salt of harmony as prepared by the philosophers with that of common ammoniac salt, otherwise known as ammonium chloride or hydrochlorate of ammonia. There is a world of difference between the second salt's fine and white fibrous crystals or grainy and colourless crystals, and that of the crystals of the first salt which are dimorphic; prismatic or rhombohedral.

In order to substantiate this observation and to augment our instructions to the Disciple of Wisdom, we include here, without having to add anything, the words of the doctor Johann-Heinrich Pott. His words were set down by Cohausen *in Lumine novo phosphoris accenso*; in the new Light of enhanced phosphor. So here follows a very curious operation, transcribed by the famous German chemist and doctor who was a colleague, a contemporary and a compatriot of Johann-Heinrich Pott:

'He took all of the flavour out of the marine salt from the Spanish coast, by digesting or putrefying it for at least forty days in the most

subtle spirit of dew. This gave him an entirely different salt, which melts like wax with the simple heat of a lamp. It had a somewhat bitter taste of a nitrous nature, though it had neither its cubic nor its prismatic form. The crystals were amassed together in the form of small blades, so transparent that one could only see them after decanting its liquor.'[87]

With regard to the birds in the image, Pierre Dujols includes an implicit reference to Philalethes. He interprets them as being the *eagles* which symbolise the sublimations that the Mercury of the Philosophers undergoes. Let us have a closer look at what the mysterious English Adept says about this long and demanding part of the Great Work:

> *Know, Brother, that the precise preparation of the Philosophers' Eagles is considered as the first degree of perfection and one requires a sharp mind to achieve it.*
> *But when the Mages speak of their Eagles, they refer to them as plural, namely in numbers from three to ten..*[88]

Two angels carry an ampulla in the air. This same ampulla is also found in the lower section of the plate. It would be a grave mistake to interpret this unique closed ampulla in a literal sense since most certainly it is closed only in appearance. It can be found in the middle of the athanor between the pair of alchemists who are once again absorbed in prayer. The glass egg in essence depicts a sealed environment in which the series of sublimations takes place. For it is indeed an egg that the artist fashions for each of the *eagles* that he must perform, one after another to perfection, so that they can be united to incubate and hatch the younglings.

The *eagles* or the *sublimations* form a series of small coctions, each exactly the same to the benefit of the same substance which must be kept fragmented. This process is symbolized by the wand that Mercury brandishes with his right hand within the receptacle. The wand is depicted with ten tiny serpents positioned on each side of it. These animalcules seem to be exiting this wand at right angles.

The humble act of praying, here carried out by the 'labourers',

underlines the importance of a deep and burning faith that must be maintained patiently throughout the waiting period to produce a favourable result. It is in this context that one should interpret the anomaly of the register at the base of the oven which is open and shows nothing but the most intense black.

It is possible that a candle is present in the register, but it does not appear to be lit. Notwithstanding the modest size of the opening and the perspective of the drawing, the light from a lamp would still be visible if it were lit.

We will quote once more from the *Journal des Sçavans* that appeared on the last day of the heat-wave. It concerns an annotation that cannot be dismissed as indulgent because it is very informative. It declares that in this case the *Vapor Bath* is once more utilized to aid the Mercury of the Philosophers to open the two noble metals. To this end, the two substances that mercury contains are both involved. One is white and the other is red. Let us at this point give the word to the chronicler from the savant periodic gazette:

> 'The white is the Moon of the Philosophers and the red or the inside is their Sun. It is from this Sun that the Masters of the Art, by use of wine spirit, extract a dye which is the true Potable Gold of the Philosophers. This happens after the Nitre has cooled down and has taken on a blue colour, shedding the green colour which it had acquired inside the crucible after two hours of cooking. This internal part of the Nitre is a sulphur that is the same as the sulphur of gold, as it takes on its colour in stages. When prepared in a certain way it gives the Regulus of Antimony a lovely golden colour.'

The *Saltpetre of the Philosophers*, as indicated both by its undeniable Latin etymology and in terms of consonance, designates the *salt* which is *for the stone* or indeed which *belongs to the stone*: Sal Petræ. Indeed, the second word in this declension can be read as marked with the genitive case as well as the dative and both cases are linked to possession.

We can do no more but touch upon the captivating paradigm that

most surely is worthy of the glory of the saline trinity which promotes the slow development of the microcosmic egg and presides over it. In the image, Altus stretched this egg to gigantic proportions as compared to the actual dimensions of the athanor which we see slumbering beneath, basking in the light of meditation and zeal.

However, Eirenaeus Philalethes declares, *this is to be understood as a truly secret furnace which the vulgar eye has never seen.*[89]

This perfect furnace is here framed by the drapery that Sulat tied three times and deliberately depicted as forming one harmonious flowing movement between the two columns of the Temple: *Jachin* and *Boaz*. It thereby makes for an almost religious or even masonic setting. In the *eleventh plate* the pillars and the draped curtains have disappeared to make way for action. The *eleventh plate* is practically the same in most respects except for a few subtle details. One such detail is the little face of the sun inside the flask at Hermes' right foot which now has gained three extra rays.

Commentary to the Ninth Plate

The serious and attentive reader will not be surprised by our assertion that the *ninth plate* is not in its rightful place. Neither is the *fourth plate*, which should come directly before it. It is not difficult to comprehend that this second part of the preparatory work comes after the initial harvest that we saw on the engraving that bears the number 4. The precious liquid is now undergoing the action of the universal fluid while in large circular bowls placed in an area covered by thick, black mud.

These two stages of the preliminary phase that precedes the Great Work must always be performed during the season that is symbolically indicated by the animals in the images, regardless of Magophon's assertion about the fourth plate which he delivered in such fallacious manner of well-meaning candour. The earlier quoted sentence from his *Hypotyposis*, quoted in its appropriate context, must now be completed with the sentence that follows directly after it and which underlines the previous annotation:

'Aries is the Criophore of Hermes, which is the same as Jupiter Ammon. The Bull, whose horns delineate the crescent are an attribute of Diana and of Isis, who is identified with the cow Io, Jupiter's lover. This is the Moon of the Philosophers. These two animals personify the two natures of the Stone.'

It is safe to say that in this passage Pierre Dujols merits the designation 'envious', which the philosophers have not hesitated to use as a label both reciprocally and for themselves, in order to stress the importance of prudence and of keeping secrets. It has sometimes led them to hide things or to deliberately lead readers astray. It is an undeniable fact that the Ram and the Bull correspond to the two principles of mercury and sulphur, thus forming a link with the two agents of the dry way. It is precisely these two which will later undergo the action of the cosmic agent and which is to be gathered and preserved. Without these two agents the sage's work will be no more than a dull series of mere chemical operations.

On ‘Wednesday the 20th of May 1640’ Esprit Gobineau de Montluisant examined the north gate of the Notre-Dame in Paris which is also known as the Virgin’s Gate. His account of this examination provides a great deal of clarity on this matter:

‘As for the Ram and the Bull, as well as the Twins that are at work, one above the other, who rule over the months of March, April and May, they teach us that it is during this period that the sages of alchemy must harvest the matter and seize it as it falls from the sky and issues forth from the aerial fluid.’[90]

When Altus illuminated the night sky of his illustrated title page with the fourth quarter of the Queen of night, perhaps he meant to express that the artist *slumbers* during this period of waning and that this is the period in which one should put the philosophic activities in the laboratory on hold?

Let us now turn our attention to the fact that the harvest of dew must itself be enriched by the cosmic influx which the sun as well as the moon sent down. This concerns an instruction the likes of which has never been offered by any author. Jacob Sulat expressed it in a most telling symbolic engraving, almost to the point of breaching the code of secrecy. Consequently we are inclined to affirm the reality of the two morning operations. This can be verified by whoever has the perseverance to follow our lead and repeat the manipulations that have, for a large part, been described by the Sieur des Marez.

To get an idea, *a priori*, of what the nature of the cosmic projection might be, it suffices to point out the expressive geometric drawing with which the author of the *Mutus Liber* represented the cosmic projection. It is clear, in any case, that the two protagonists in the Great Work that are symbolized by the ram and the bull are attracted to the celestial mana; each with a different impulse that matches their particular nature. For it is indeed a miraculous aliment which Jean-FranÃ§ois Noël mentions in his *Dictionary of Fables* where he points out that ‘those from the Orient generally venerate, in particular, the mana, and they call it the *Sugared-Almond of the Almighty*’. This humanistic diplomat from the time of the Revolution also relates that the famous rabbi Akiba-Ben-Joseph, who lived during the 1st century

of the Christian era, professed 'that the mana manifested as a result of the coagulation of celestial light'.

What we see presented here is the very foundation of Gnosis; this idea that mind and matter are one and the same thing. This is also expressed by the Ouroboros, the snake who devoured its own tail — *serpens qui caudam devoravit* — which encircles the motto: 'Εν το παν'; *one and all*. The same reptile, emblematic of the heart of the Work, is shown in a manuscript at the Library of Saint-Marc in Venice which by all appearances seems to originate from the 11th century. Marcellin Berthelot studied this manuscript in detail. On the backside of folio 188, amongst the little drawings that make up Cleopatra's *Chrysopoeia*[91] a depiction of this famous Ouroboros is shown. In the Greek manuscript, filed under number 2327 at the National Library, this symbol without beginning nor end is accompanied by an apophthegm that is frequently encountered in Latin treatises of the Middle Ages: *Nature rejoices in nature*; natura natura laetatur.

On another level, that of humanity, it is quite likely that in fateful moments of greatest tribulation when humanity is in grave peril, that it will receive from space, in a supernatural way, the necessary sustenance that the Earth has suddenly refused to give it:

> 'And (God) rained down on them manna to eat and gave them the grain of heaven.
> Man ate of the bread of the angels; he sent them food in abundance'.[92]

In this light the similarities become apparent between the dew of manna, the primarily physical phenomenon which we regularly notice, and the miracle of the second phenomenon which happened, according to the *Old Testament*, at the time of the Exodus of the people of Israel:

> '...in the morning the dew lay around the camp.
> And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground.'[93]

The Bible specifies, by the way, that the two mysterious substances fell down together at times of trouble and hardship:

> ‘When the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell with it.’[94]

On this *ninth plate* and by way of the distinctive section at the bottom of the composition, Altus tried to express, without further ado, the destination of this *dew*. The two alchemists pour this natural vehicle of the astral spirit into a round bottomed flask which the woman then presents in a taunting manner to a somewhat dismayed Mercury. From this we may gather that the time has not yet come for him to take it.

From this celestial water, or more precisely from the precious salt that it holds in solution, the metalloid will gain its great new virtue. This is personified by the naked mythological god who holds the staff with ten baby snakes in his left hand while supporting it with his elbow. This unique attribute is included in our comments with the preceding image and, as mentioned, is a symbol of the *eagles* or *sublimations*.

Commentary to the Tenth Plate

At the onset of the study of this tenth plate, the reader should take heed of the warning that we put forward here. The mode of operation at this point is so involved that we must be cautious not to divulge too much and fall into full disclosure. Many will be in for a surprise, especially those who thus far have found the manipulations to be complex or even impossible to piece together in their linear order.

One must be keenly aware of the inevitable fact that speculation alone will never suffice. Physical experience remains essential as it rectifies the errors and demands that the practitioner verifies and corrects their ways. The part of the work which has been distinguished as being separate from the Great Work, and which Jacob Sulat described with such minute precision, is laborious yet relatively easy to complete. It results in the philosophical elevation of the two adjuvant salts as discretely conferred by the *eighth plate*. Except for its *kernel*, these salts constitute the philosophical egg, including its shell. The shell consequently encloses the egg so that a secret work of art and of 'nature' can take place. This secret work is both physical and chemical and by no means corresponds with the work of the glassier as is maliciously portrayed by the author of the *Mutus Liber*. Pierre Dujols wrote a paragraph of a good ten lines on the subject of this fallacious glass blowing which could otherwise greatly distract those skilled with the polysilicate.

Earlier, in the *sixth* and *seventh engraving*s we came across the two symbols of utmost importance that relate to the base of nature. There they were being poured out of their respective bottles and here they reappear, this time occupying the two plates of a scale. This weighing instrument has been placed on the table just like it will be in the *thirteenth plate*. The flail and needle of the scales are presented as arching out at an angle of thirty or forty-five degrees from the hook. Could that perhaps be a subtle indication of the proportions going from single to double? Whatever the answer to that might be, it seems to be the same argument as put forth again in a unique fashion on the

fourteenth plate where the scale is ready for a weighing with both plates being level with each other. One might rightly feel confused about the fact that we are led to believe either that the two ingredients weigh the same or that a normal scale is of no help.

We shall soon provide our view on the matter; however, let us first point out that both episemons which have been placed on a plate do not represent a portion, and even less so a particle, but designate the required quantity of the two substances.

On the left is the asterisk of *harmoniac*, on the right the corolla that symbolizes philosophic gold. The first symbol is reminiscent of sulfur and the second of salt. With a great deal of skill, the woman pours them together into the same bowl which again is marked by the two hieroglyphs. The operator now has ample access to the mercury which has been enriched and which was put in a covered flask in the previous image. The operator adds this first principle to the two others that have already been mixed together. Aided by his companion he now attempts to establish the natural weights and proportions of these matters as best he can. If one follows the alchemist's gaze over to his right, one will become aware of the importance that this conveys for the preceding manipulation as if the alchemist were determining the extra, but indispensable, addition required for the solution of sulfur. Thus, with the passive element, our two artists complete the composite made of three parts which is readied here for the final coction.

The Franciscan Father from Castaigne presented this advanced stage in the Great Work in his *Basilian Aphorisms* as the one to start with and provides the following clarification:

'We begin our hermetic work by joining together the three principles prepared in certain proportions: half of the weight of the body must equal that of the mind and the soul.'[95]

Based on our personal experience in the laboratory we can confirm that nothing is missing from this philosophical elucidation and that nothing in it is superfluous. Each one of the components exists in the exact required quantity.

Mercury must however be considered an exception. I speak here of

that water which the sages recommend us not to leave out and which The Cosmopolitan must have been referring to in his famous *parable*:

> 'The work is something that does not allow the inclusion of anything else but the philosophic water which has come to you at times in your dreams, and which must be present in ten parts for one part of the body.'[96]

As a result, everything in alchemy is prepared in a natural way in the philosophic work. In that sense alchemy has at times been referred to as the *art of music* or *the great harmony*. In the same sense, the egg or philosophical flask cannot be the one that the *blower* from this *tenth engraving* welds closed with his torch. Only harmoniac salt can canonically close the receptacle of nature. Only *harmoniac salt* can *seal* [sel — sceller] the receptacle in the qabalistic sense of the word. The Great Work is nothing but a positive ontogenesis in which the fertilized egg in its perfection does not need any external artifice apart from, self-evidently, elementary fire. The philosophical egg is a perfectly organized body covered by its protective shell, its hard and crusty coating, which is calcareous in nature and which is the result of a transformation of the outer part of the salt.

Altus did not fail to respect the general rule that all authors abide by, of only showing us the oval glass flask that belongs with the wet way and in which the composite is subjected to the final cooking. Similarly, in the dry way, the *composite of composites* is placed in an appropriate crucible, so that it can be formed into an egg and can be subjected to the constant and progressive action of external heat. This same subject is found throughout the writings of President d'Espagnet. This is particularly apparent where he writes about the two vases, the natural and the artificial, each of which he distinguishes quite precisely in the one hundred and ninth canon of his *Secret Work*:

> 'The vase in which the philosophers cook their work has two origins; one is from Nature, the other from art. The natural vase, which is also called the philosophical vase, is the Earth of the Stone, or the female, or indeed the womb in which the

male's semen enters and is putrefied and prepared for generation. However the vessel of art is triple, indeed, for the secret is cooked in the triple vessel.'[97]

It is this same natural vase to which Jean Lallemant's seemingly impenetrable riddle refers. I am speaking here about the RERE-RER as found in the oratory of the charming hotel about which Fulcanelli gave such an adequate explanation in 1926. Of course one has to come a long way from the interpretation of the sculptures in a dwelling in Bourges, which prove to be in perfect harmony with the six sibylline words and the decoration of the credenza, to our current alchemical context. Therefore the student is advised to read this long passage in which Fulcanelli first reminds us of the meaning of the sibyl. He actually states that the philosopher is one who knows how to make glass and proceeds to explain quite clearly that the secret vessel is not the container, even if it is made of the most noble crystal, but rather the very contents which, when undergoing fusion then present the consistency and the appearance of liquefied glass. As for this precious *frit* we can confirm this is something altogether different from a common mixture. It keeps the sulfur in dissolution — this spirit that is always ready to escape. In this context Fulcanelli suggests:

'Apply yourself to making it according to our art, without paying too much attention to the procedure of glass-making.'[98]

That is indeed why, in correspondence with RERE = 4 and RER = 3, one will undoubtedly notice that of the four asterisks for the philosophic harmoniac only three remain on our artist's flask. The missing one now hovers over the mixture that the female operator made and into which the floret is only half-immersed.

At the moment the flask is closed only the rose remains. The rose is the symbol of sulphur and of spiritual gold which forthwith is meant to be fed with a constant and gradually increasing heat in the middle of the athanor. Subsequently four colours appear from the darkness, one after the other, as shown in the image of the target on the left. This target is positioned right next to the gently active lamp-heated oven and shows a series of colours ranging from black on the outside to the central point of red. The colours of white and yellow or

‘*flavastre*’[99] are shown in between. At the end of the week of weeks — *hebdomas hebdomadum* — the marriage of Diana and Apollo is consummated. Thereby the most perfect union is achieved whose degree, or rather whose coefficient of transmutative power, is indicated by the number *ten* as attributed to each one of the wedded minerals. As we already know, Diana and Apollo refer to mercury and sulphur or, if one prefers, to the philosophical moon and sun. The sun is symbolised on the top of Phoebus’ left sleeve by a leonine mask. Jean-Jacques Manget omitted this detail in the equivalent *tenth plate* of his reproduction which again underlines that this copy is not entirely faithful to the original.

In line with the vegetal representation of the vehicle of the cosmic agent, the doctor from Geneva represented a flat landscape dotted with the same nostoc that we encountered in the *fourth plate*. The landscape in the original instead shows bare hills before which Diana-Luna and Phoebus-Liber are depicted as forming one flowing chain up to the athanor through the contact of their palms.

In conclusion, let us note here King Hali’s opinion, expressed in *Child’s play* to enlighten us on *the subject of the vase or Egg of the Philosophers* — de Vase sive Ovo Philosophorum:

> ‘Learn how the vase of our work functions, because the vase is the root and the origin of our mastery. And this very same vase is like the womb in animals.’[100]

Commentary to the Eleventh Plate

At first glance the allegorical composition of this *eleventh plate* seems to resemble that of the *eighth plate* in all aspects.

Nevertheless there are some differences. Mercury, or Hermes, in his transparent egg, stands upon the earth from whence he came, which is now luminous, like the diaphanous substance which according to Savinien from Cyrano de Bergerac constitutes a surface that is generally unconceivable, namely that of the sun. It is a distinct pleasure to read what the philosopher has to say about this sublimated earth — this same earth encountered in Jacob Sulat's flask and in *the great plains of day*; that which *resembles glowing snowflakes*:

> 'The respect with which I made my footprints across this luminous countryside continued to nourish the burning desire within me to pursue my voyage. I was ashamed to be walking upon the day: my very body, surprised, wished for my eyes to confirm what it felt, and this transparent earth to which my eyes turned did not seem to be able to support my body, and my instinct, in spite of myself, became the master of my thoughts, pulling them towards the depths of a bottomless source of light.'[101]

The god Mercury, instead of wearing his usual petasos, this time wears a kind of cap. This type of head covering, pierced with two open eyes and with unfolded wings on either side, resembles an owl in flight.

As such, it becomes the curious symbolisation of the knowledge associated with that nocturnal bird attributed to Minerva which is found *perched on a vase* on the obverse of Athenian coins. The *Mercury of the Philosophers* provides unlimited knowledge. This mercury has nothing to do with quicksilver or commercial mercury. The Mercury of the Sages becomes a truly deep mirror at the point when it reaches the degree of exaltation that it has here, a source for reflection upon

the eternal and immovable present:

'It is in this *mirror*, according to the masters, that man can see nature unveiled. Thanks to this mirror, man can behold the ancient truth in its traditional sense. For nature never shows herself to the seeker except through the intermediary of this mirror which contains its reflected image.'[102]

However such an examination of nature is not easy if one is to believe Dante who followed, throughout his personal sublimation, the instruction of Beatrice:

> *We are uplifted to the seventh splendour*.

Noi sem levati al settimo splendore.[103]

Indeed, the poet received from his Lady an indication of the dangerous consequences which would put him in Semele's position. She who was reduced to ash for having desired to behold Jupiter in all his majesty. From a qabalistic point of view, the noun σημαλέος, *semaleos*, which is very close to name of daughter of *Harmonia*, is very interesting. It was Jupiter's adjective and means *one who writes signs in the sky*.

Similarly, Dante would be like a branch struck by lightning — *sarebbe fronda che tuono scoscende* — if Beatrice did not moderate the rays of her beauty. That is why *one who is in love with wisdom* will not foresake the wish to have an intimate communion with the mineral Virgin. Alighieri quotes her in close relation to our present subject: Similarly, Dante *would be like a branch struck by lightning*, — sarebbe fronda che tuono scoscende, — if Beatrice did not moderate the rays of her beauty. That is why *one who is in love with science* will not abandon the wish for an intimate communion with the mineral Virgin. The Alighieri quotes her in connection with what we are talking about:

> 'Your mind be with your eyes;
> and, in them, mirrored the shape,
> which in this mirror shall be shown.'[104]

The *speculum sapientiae* owes its luster to the *sun of the sages or*

philosophic gold which Philalethes insidiously suggests can be found inside metallic gold. Magophon condemns this suggestion in his *Hypotyposis*, in the section where he addresses the nature of *common gold*. There he makes the following highly pertinent observation:

'It is necessary in this case to submit it to difficult and dangerous manipulations,for this metal can be transformed into an explosive. A number of memoirs from the 18th century report fatal accidents following this preparation. However, if the disciple follows the right school, he will avoid this sophistic pitfall and will operate hermetically. He will thus stay out of harm's way.'

It is important, of course, as we have stressed earlier, not to mix up the designations *ammonia, ammoniac*, and *harmoniac*, and avoid the preparation by trichloride and common alkali of the dangerous oxide called *fulminating gold*.[105] The Ancients and Basil Valentine in particular also called it *gold lime* (calx auri). Basil Valentine specified its preparation in his *Haliography* by use of tartar oil, that is to say a potassium carbonate solution, as a catalyst for the preparation of his explosive.

According to Altus, the water in the Mirror of the Sages is of a great degree of purity. The artificial and microcosmic sun which lights it, as one may have noticed, is in exaltation. This state of exaltation is indicated by the sun's human face and the fact that it spreads its rays more finely in ten figurative points. These ten points represent the ten eagles or sublimations. Thus Jacob Sulat's indications are at times obvious and at other times very subtle, if not almost indiscernible. Even so, these indications are not without significant value.

The symbol of sublimation might easily go unnoticed. It has been added to the symbol of tartar at the end of the little branch that is carried by the volatile animal at the front on the left hand side of the circonvoluting group in our image. Let us examine this symbol more closely. It is a symbol frequently encountered in ancient manuals and is formed by two little parallel lines, the upper line bending outwards in the middle, forming a half-circle.

Some people will immediately object, apparently well-justified, that in chemistry it is impossible to sublimate any potassium hyaloid

composite. Rather, we would like to point out that one must not lose sight of the fact that we are talking about ancient alchemy which is immutable whereas science never stops evolving. This is because, as Lavoisier demonstrated, the latter is of an empiric and modern nature.

As conclusive response to any peremptory allegation that one might make, we shall here let the famous Fulcanelli speak in our stead. He expounds on the relevance of the material application of the allegory which the Adept of Dampierre-sur-Boutonne took from the three synoptic evangelists, and which he summarized in the motto, Sic luceat lux vestra; *Let your light shine forth:*:

> 'In the same way, we observe in the Work the need to render manifest this inner fire, this light or this soul that is invisible under the hard crust of heavy matter. The operation used by the ancient philosophers to reach this goal was called sublimation, although it has but a very remote connection with the ordinary sublimation of spagyrists. For the spirit, ready to disengage itself as soon as it has been given the means, cannot however totally abandon the body. It creates for itself a garb closer to its nature, more adaptable to its will, from the clear and purified particles it can gather around itself so as to use it as its new vehicle.'[106]

We shall humbly complete these fitting and elucidating words, written by our Master, with the following ones borrowed from Cypriano Piccolpassi. These words can be found at the beginning of his *Second Book* and deal with *potassium tartrate, the potassium salt of tartaric acid*; in short, the salt formed and engendered in our *cream of tartar*:

> 'One should know that the wine dregs in our region are collected predominantly in November and December rather than at other times, seeing as at this time the wines have transformed. The tartar can be collected at any time, so long as the barrels are reasonably dry, these barrels being those in which the wine had been kept for a long time. If one scrapes

the inside of these barrels with an iron bar, one will obtain a crust one or two inches thick. That is the tartar.'[107]

We will offer additional advice well worth taking into account which is that one should not apply any artificial method to more easily prepare the solution of tartar. The two factors of time and patience, in this case, play an important role. To better understand this, one should consult the work of Nicolas Lémery in the excellent version edited by Baron Theodore D'Henouville, who was also a doctor in medicine.[108]

On the *eighth figure*, the symbol for sublimation is not above the symbol for tartar. That is an important detail which distinguishes it from the current image. In the current image we encounter another difference, namely that the curtains have been removed and that two extra windows have been opened. We are, however, still in the same laboratory furnished with the athanor on either side of which are the two people praying. Therefore, in contrast to what Magophon says about this *eleventh plate* representing the repetition of the preceding operations, we believe that it emphasizes the work represented in the *eighth* and, more precisely, that it suggests a subsequent, complementary part of this work.

The lamp that was missing at the bottom of the oven that was not burning is now alight, right at the edge of the opening so that we can easily see it. Interpreting the removal of the heavy curtains as a precautionary measure to avoid them catching fire might seem rather farfetched, just as it does not seem necessary to have greater aeration through the two new windows in the drawing. One could however imagine that the smoke and the gases that would be released during the operation are better evacuated. This dual awareness of both the fire and the necessary ventilation is undoubtedly meant to metaphorically convey a way of gentle heating with a large ampulla, closed with a blunt tip, in which the mythological inhabitant is now hidden from our view.

By the way, there is good reason to believe that the weakness of the light — tiny in comparison to the masonry oven — has been depicted that way by our Adept so that its gentleness might convey the

flexibility and the manoeuvrability necessary to be able to apply the fire in the right proportions. The fixture shown in the lower rectangle corresponds to the apparatus that Philalethes distinguished from the secret furnace. It corresponds, in short, to the stove which he described in the following (abridged) passage:

> 'It is the stove that we call common which is our calm Henry. It must have been made out of bricks or clay, ... This stove we call Athanor, and the shape which I like best is that of a tower with a "nest" at the top.'109

Commentary to the Twelfth Plate

In the same way that the previous plate appears to be a repetition of the *eighth*, the present plate almost identically resembles the *ninth*.

Once again we see the six large bowls being exposed to the action of the celestial influx. The difference here is that their contents, at around the same level, ripple and tremble ever so slightly because of the powerful saturnian force of conception during this particular period. This is another detail in the drawing that the Genevan doctor neglected to reproduce in the edition of *The Curious Chemical Library*.

The ram and the bull, which can be observed in both images, incontestably represent the two protagonists of the Great Work, *mercury* and *sulphur*. They also symbolise with no less certitude, the two richest months of spring. In line with this one can easily imagine that the spirit of the World, that of *renewal*, in the old days called *primrose* or *primavera* (the primal green or glass[110]), is both more abundant and more active during the month of May than it is during the month of April.

The movement of the waves has become significant and has been transmitted to the liquid which is gently and carefully shaken. As such it presents a fitting illustration of the first paragraph of the *Emerald Tablet*:

> 'It is true without error, certain and most true. That which is below is like that which is above. And that which is above is like that which is below to accomplish the miracles of one only thing.'[111]

The *waves* are the *waters* that God separated, or rather which He sublimated at the beginning of the *Book of Genesis*. It is that which the ancient alchemists, in their microcosmic creation, called the celestial waters:

'And God made the sky, and He separated the waters which were beneath the sky from the waters which were above it. And it came to

be this way.'

For one could not mistake rain-filled clouds, pushed by the wind, with the thick bubbling which, on the current engraving, is tempered more by the moon than by the sun. Following the Master's example we have often noted the external conditions that is a *sine qua non* for the work and which the Sieur des Marez himself had the firm intention of making understood and respected.

The elaboration above all demands that the night sky is calm and clear, without wind, rain or nebulosity. Jean-Jacques Manget, whilst aware of the eminent role of the higher waters, makes another mistake in his version of the *Mutus Liber* by disregarding the precise form of the clouds as drawn by the first artist. The difference between the bubbling tide of the first and the stormy cumulo-nimbus of the second is obvious.112

This noteworthy difference should be underlined lest the attentive researcher would fall into an abyss of confusion. In order to substantiate our point about this scientific and fundamental truth we shall once more call upon a unique book which, at first glance, seems to be far removed from the domain of hermetics.

Let us examine what the *cavalier* Cipriano Piccolpasso wrote about the power of the white star of the night in his book *Potter's Art* and on which Fulcanelli commented. The fire to which he refers in this case is not the ordinary element used in the furnace but the *Athanor's* mysterious spiritual agent, saline and sulphurous, which the Ancients qualified as *secret*. Those who are aware of the fact that the work of a 'vase-maker' is often compared to that of an alchemist will not be surprised by the following acute admonition:

'Upon commencement one should address prayers to God with all one's heart, thanking Him for all that He gives us. When you take fire, however, consider before doing so the state of the moon, for it is of great consequence. I have heard from those who have long practised the art and who have a lot of experience that when one chooses to take the fire during a declining moon, the clarity of the fire will be poor because the moon itself lacks lustre. When doing this, take special care to look for any sign of rain, for this would be disastrous

and you must make sure the rain passes first. I recommend you to always accomplish these things in the name of Jesus Christ.'[113]

Perfectly schooled in the astral *infusion* of which the moon remains the principal source, Jacques Jacques Cœur, the great *argentier* of King Charles VII, did not miss the fact that it was symbolically present in his palace in Bourges. At the right side of the lintel above the door that leads to the chapel, one can see the moon in its first quarter appearing like a rather unwieldy mask of a female which an angel holds up with its wings spread out and uncomfortably twisted upon the fold of the frieze. However the celestial messenger is friendly-looking. Having found shelter in this secret place it welcomes those passionate about alchemy, those who might be deserving of its exceptional secret and who might be able to gauge its worth and understand it.

On a related note, let us have a look at the writings of an anonymous author in a unique treatise that by all appearances seems to have been written under the reign of Louis-Philippe. No physicist with an objective and scientific aptitude could remain indifferent to the simple and precise wording of this treatise where it concerns the formidable domain of our current investigation:

'Nowadays everyone knows that the light sent from the moon is nothing but an imprint of the sun's light, mixed with the light from other stars. The moon is therefore the receptacle or the central fire that all the philosophers have heard about and which is the source of their living water. So if you want to reduce the sun's rays to water, choose the moment when the moon transmits them in abundance, in other words when the moon is full or close to being full. This way you will have the fiery water of the rays of the sun and the moon in their highest potency ...

'In the South of France the work can begin in the month of March and be brought to a close in the month of September, but in Paris and the rest of the kingdom, one cannot begin any earlier than April, and by autumn the second lifeblood would be so weak that it would be a waste of time to work with it.'[114]

So the season is important and, more exactly, so is the month when

due to favourable temperatures the two natures, antagonistic at the beginning of the work, rush at one another like the ram and the bull on either side of the six bowls. The six bowls are positioned in the shape of a triangle with its apex pointing towards the top of our image. This formation was not chosen without reason. Notwithstanding the perspective, the configuration of the bowls forms a triangular prism which, we know when placed on its base, is the symbol of any fiery power.

It is the hieroglyphic evocation of the *powerful force of forces*, of Trismegistus in its *Tablet*, — haec est totius fortitudinis fortitude fortis; — the one belonging to the nitrous and celestial spirit that is dealt with in Altus' *twelfth plate*. It is the spirit which the mercury will absorb with thirst in the strong desire to develop within itself the sulphurous seed that is the principle of its future coagulation.

Let us here recall what Fulacnelli remarked in the first tome of his *Dwellings* p.246 on the subject of the secret reason for the Egyptians to put cats, who spend so much time in moonlight, on par with the gods. The Master did not write down all of his thoughts on the subject but focused on the *whiskers* of the little feline, noting that 'they reflect a point of great knowledge'. What he did not mention though was the way in which these whiskers help the charming animal make its way through the darkness. The X shape of its whiskers is reminiscent of a *radar* — before the invention of the device as we know it — which comprises a mode of detection and telemetry by grace of the waves. Sometimes these waves saturate the cat up to the point where they discharge into a crackling of sparks. Altus had an intimate knowledge of these waves and left us with a depiction of the long process that is required to capture them in their saline form.

The pair of alchemists have filled their large flask with a liquid that is even richer after this second exposure. They directly hand over this flask to the god Mercury which, as Magophon noted with the ninth plate, bought this same 'flask of divine water from a peasant woman.' philosophic mercury, according to all authors and as confirmed by experience, desperately seeks out the universal spirit. Our liquid is charged with this universal spirit to the point of saturation; to the

point which permits its incredible and entirely natural crystallisation.

Lastly, Manget repeats the brotherly gesture that he made on the *third* and *fourth plates* by once more placing the orb and cross at the top of the church tower that can be seen here. This is the hieroglyph of the black ore which contains and is the only thing that can provide the *dry water which does not wet the hands*.

Commentary to the Thirteenth Plate

When examining this *thirteenth plate* the reader will immediately notice that it closely resembles the *tenth plate* with its partition between the practical and the symbolical parts of the image. We can conclude that there have been six consecutive plates that appear in pairs. Each pair at first glance seems identical but this is not quite the case, as we have pointed out earlier, and neither is it the case for this plate. Upon closer examination a number of suprising discrepancies will come to light.

Let us have a closer look at the man who simultaneously pours out two flasks, each into one of the two plates of the scale. Now only two asterisks appear in the flask in his right hand whilst the one he is holding in his left hand shows no more than a tiny sun instead of the *flosculus* it was marked with previously.

The two little signs which have disappeared and which have remained inside the recipient together constitute the famous RE, in other words, two thirds of RER and half of the initial RERE.

It is not our intention to try to complicate or obscure the earlier mentioned elucidation by Fulcanelli on this matter. Jacob Sulat's teachings, which we rigorously adhere, preceded the *Mystery of the Cathedrals* by two and a half centuries. The book of the Master refers to the *compost*, and it is this same enigma that the Lallemant hotel and the *tenth* and *thirteenth engravings* of the *Mutus Liber* refer to. This compost is the term used in ancient treatises for the philosophic *composite* which is ready to raise itself and go through the progression that is ponderable both in terms of colour and sound and which is in perfect harmony with the progressive growth of the external or elementary fire.

Although the Master takes great care to follow the ancestors in respecting the secret, he did not neglect to reveal that the RER hides what is perhaps the most important arcane secret of the Great Work. According to the Master, the RER expresses the vase which allows the cooking of the RERE *compositum* and which gives rise to the surprising

and successive transformations of this *compositum* until it reaches ultimate perfection. When Fulcanelli assured us that the knowledge of RER, of the vessel, easily leads to the knowledge of RERE, one should understand that the Egg of the Philosophers can be compared with a chicken's egg in that the shell, or the container, is formed at the same time as its contents and the diverse substances which are destined to develop into the new individual.

It seems appropriate at this point to return to the subject of the vitreous appearance of the philosophical egg which the Sieur des Marez himself willingly insisted upon revealing through the shape of the round-bottom flask which is closed by the flame that is provided by the 'alchemist-blower'.

Although the recipient has once again received an overabundant amount of influx from its second exposure and has been tipped practically horizontal in order for it to be closed, there are two singularities that should not have gone unnoticed by the reader. Firstly, the sign for harmoniac has disappeared. Secondly, the surface of the mercurial liquid remains unchanged while one would expect it to be flat and perpendicular to the vertical axis. The coincidence of these two singular indications lead to the idea that the ordinary laboratory flask is nothing but a symbol for the egg in the composition of which the mysterious harmonious salt finds itself absorbed.

On the *tenth plate* which is practically the same, the philosophic mercury still had the mobility of a liquid whilst the hieroglyph with eight rays is not present. One could add that the incorporated sulphur at that point was in a vegetative state, as was neatly symbolized by the flowering wild Rose of the Sages. As a first step towards the future triumphant rose, the hermetic flower in this plate is replaced by the sun to which it gave birth. *Hortulanus*, whose writings we have quoted earlier, wrote the following about the mineral star and about *verissimum* in his comments on Hermes' Emerald Tablet. He commented on the *Emerald Tablet* sentence by sentence and even word by word:

> *For the most veritable sun is engendered by Art. Hermes states most veritable in the superlative, because the sun engendered by*

this Art, excels above the natural sun in all its proprieties, both medicinally and otherwise.[115]

This sun, as we know, signifies both Sulphur and the Gold of the Sages. In the fourth partition of the image, the alchemist and his wife place this sun in the heart of the athanor.

Heated by an external flame, the coagulating quality of this *solar sulphur* raises the *mercury* to the highest point of fixity. Both of these matters can be found at the bottom of the page to the right of the philosophical furnace in the personification of Diana and Apollo. The goddess wears on her head the moon as indicated by the thin crescent. The god wears on his head the daily star which is depicted as encircled with rays.

The target on the left side of the image is larger now. It contains the four main colours which distinguish the four phases of the coction. The black outer ring gives away to the six colours that show through a prism: violet, blue, green, yellow, orange and red. Indigo does not exist. The only reason the colour indigo used to be distinguished was to arrive, one way or another, at the number seven. Few have realized that this was the only reason why indigo is mentioned.

The short sleeves of Apollo's acton now show two lion faces instead of the single face as shown on the *tenth engraving*. This signifies the union of the two sulphurous principles within him, in other words, of the *green* and the *red lion*. Manget did not indicate anything of the like in his engraving. On the cuff of the god's half boots, one can see the three points that the freemasons must have borrowed from the Great Work and which the author of the invaluable *Bibliotheca* could not, or did not intend to point out. Our intentions are different however, and our attention here is caught by the bowstring, which was relaxed on the *tenth plate* but which is now strung in such a way that it is suitable to approach the target with the greatest precision.

Diana and Phoebus, divinities from the hermetic Olympus who consistently express their magnetic link, have turned over their hands which are placed on top of one another, palm on palm, whilst their power which began at ten is multiplied by ten again. This power is thus multiplied over and over and the progression runs into the

thousands. This is indicated by the locution *et cætera* of limitlessness:

> '.. to the extent that with this Medicine,
> A small portion thrown into the sea
> would suffice, if the sea were made of quick silver,
> To transform it entirely into gold.'116

Hence, in conclusion, what we see here is the multiplication that constitutes the final phase of the Great Work. Magophon barely speaks of this in his explanation of this image, after having dedicated no more than a meagre three lines to the previous image, the *seventh plate*.

When studying a compartment of the marvellous ceiling found in the castle at Dampierre-sur-Bouronne, Fulcanelli proves to be much more forthcoming in his second work. It is important to make careful note of the long passage which we are now going to clarify with the details as presented by Jacob Sulat and of which Guillaume Salmon himself corroborated in his *Dictionary*:

> 'The Multiplication was hidden by the Sages in the tale of the Snake Hydra. When one of its heads was cut off, ten more grew in its place: for with each Multiplication the stone gains ten times its quality. That is the nature of true Multiplication.'117

The anonymous commentator in the *Journal des Sçavans*, who was undoubtedly triggered by the successive multiplications of the base number, briefly noted: 'The 13th Plate contains the Projection.'

> 'The powder of projection,' Dom Pernety explains, 'is a powder which is projected in tiny quantities onto imperfect metals in fusion, with which they are transformed, depending on their degree of perfection.'118

Commentary to the Fourteenth Plate

The three ovens which occupy the upper frame of this penultimate plate each correspond to the three characters placed directly beneath them. Together they represent the three principle parts of the final coction, each clearly distinct from one another. We see two women with their distaffs tucked into their belts and the boy who has put down his racket and ball. They express just how important it is that the heat is maintained and well-regulated during this meticulous operation by the manner in which they dedicate their complete attention and care in looking after the heating lamp. This is why they are depicted as cutting off, deftly with a pair of scissors, the carbonated part of the wick while simultaneously filling the reservoir with flammable material.

It is doubtlessly with a sense of black humour that an alchemical treatise which has influenced the opinion of a majority of good authors merrily begins — *incipit fauste* — with the following sentence which would fit well as subtitle to the image of our three unique characters here:

'The advance of the Work is called all women's work and children's play — *Operis procession dicitur omne upus mulierum, & ludus puerorum*.'

The invaluable text 'was copied from a very old book, by a certain doctor who resided in the famous city of Leipzig — est per quondam doctorem in famosa civitate Lypsiae commorantem, ex vetustissimo libro exscriptus.'

> 'This ancient book, which used to belong to the Roman Emperor Charles IV, is the one he worked from to make our Stone and which helped him to accomplish it in perfection. What is more, he founded many monasteries of various orders and built a number of remarkable collegiate churches and cathedrals, etc.'[119]

It was of course inevitable that the monarch of the Holy Empire,

born in Prague in 1311 and a true patron of the Arts and the Sciences, would be generously scorned and mocked.

Let us turn our attention to what is written in this extraordinary work, which may well have been the breviary of John of Luxemburg's son. We will focus on the writings that are most closely linked to the portion of the plate we are currently examining. To the comfort of those new to the field of hermetics, both from a chemical and a spagyric perspective, the trio of matters is barely hidden at all. First there is the cleansing saltpetre, then the ammonium chloride, and lastly the toughest combustible:

> 'However the three children's games must precede the women's work. For children play with three things. Firstly hey often play with very old walls. Secondly with urine. Thirdly with coal.'120

Following this, the same Adept briefly yet effectively explains the philosophical and scientific meaning of these three strange games:

> 'The first game obtains the matter of the stone. The second game increases its soul. The third game prepares the body for life.'121 As far as women are concerned, the anonymous alchemist mentions that their work consists of cooking — *opus earum est coquere* — before concluding with a sentence pointing towards the necessary predisposition towards intelligence, namely with the same sentence which Magophon used at the end of the passage dedicated to the *fourteenth plate* in his *Hypotyposis*:
>
> '*Qui ergo potest capere capiat.*
>
> Let him who understands understand.'

There is no doubt that the bookseller cum hermeticist, who was a distinguished Latinist and Hellenist, had read, long before we did, the

above quoted treatise in the second volume of *The Art of making Gold, which is called Chemistry*.[122] This reading may have led to his prudence when it comes to explaining Sulat's engraving:

'We cannot betray the author's wishes, which clearly seem to show his staunch aim to allow the symbols alone to express his whole idea.'

The successive numbers VI, II and X which appear as Roman numerals are linked to the colours of which the first six we have already noted being the ones also observed in a prism, fading into black. This series of colours can only be verified by the eyes, quoting Fulcanelli, *through glass*.[123] This is followed in the middle of the coction by the *peacock's tail* and thereafter by *whiteness*. These two coloured stages and their separation in the middle are portrayed by the boy and his number II. This also shows the point at which the continuous heat must begin to diminish, as symbolized by the difference in height between the boy and the two girls.

In addition to these colours there are two final colours, yellow and dark red, which bring us to the number X of their totality. The red which appears at the end of the prism that comprises the dark period was always considered as false, when compared with the final *ruby* which characterises the *Stone* or Universal Medicine that is also called the *Great Red Wax — Optima Cera Rubea*. This is an important periphrasis of which Fulcanelli provides a comprehensive explanation in *Dwellings of the Philosophers*.[124]

At the start of our *Introduction*, we expounded on the succinct definition that Martinus Rulandus provides in his *Lexicon*: 'Alchemy is the separation of the impure from the purest substance.' The same idea of constant progression and improvement coincides with the development of the inner being of the *artist*. This is conveyed by the word with which the alchemists reserved for designating the colour and the nature of the Philosopher's Stone: *purple*. The word purple comes from the Latin *purpura*, which is dark red. According to the alchemy of the Word, this is the pure of the pure [*pur du pur*], πυρ πυρός, *pur puros,* in other words, the *fire of fire*...

The third framed section of the image depicts the two parts of the coction which we have previously adumbrated. The first part ends

with the *white stone*, and the second ends with the *red stone*. The first part is characterised by the moon, the second part by the sun. The cutaway drawing of the inside of the two ovens shows the vase of nature, closed by a lid or a cover plate, in the course of the two phases of the same preparation. Each of these phases of preparation should take three days as is indicated by the two spheres next to the athanors, each of which contain three times the alchemical symbol of a day. This alchemical symbol of the day consists of a very small circle with a stem attached to it on a vertical axis.

The flames that are depicted licking the philosophical egg here are much higher than any oil lamp could provide, regardless of whether it has many wicks or not. Yet these flames are indicative of a heat that only barely exceeds 400 degrees. We would like to take this opportunity to bring to the reader's attention that modern science itself has refuted the erroneous idea that very high temperatures would be a requirement for the realisation of any type of transmutation. A mere thirty years ago the main argument used against alchemists was that they did not have the means to provide a sufficiently high degree of heat. Today it is recognised that the real agent of transmutation at the heart of the mineral realm is magnetism. This magnetism unquestionably must be activated by a certain external energy source.

Under the two mineral stars in exaltation, an invisible hand empties two cupules into two dishes with thin edges and long handles attached to them. Apart from their size, these cupules appear to be quite similar to the recipients shown in the furnaces directly above them. A thin stream of viscous liquid pours out and fills the dish on the left, yet slightly misses the dish on the right and pours outside of it. On one side the woman signals this as being a serious mistake with two fingers lifted in imitation of the devil's horns. On the other side the man points out success with his index finger. Both of them cover their lips with their left hands as a sign of silence.

This dish with a rim and a handle is reminiscent of the mirror which the ancient authors were so discreet about and by which all of nature's secrets come within grasp of the alchemist. That marvellous looking

glass is made up of the Mercury of the Sages that has been raised to the highest level of purification. This solar mercury can be seen inside the bowl and underneath the well-known hieroglyph. The symbol of solar mercury is now completed with the addition of the central point that turns the circle into the symbol of gold and of the sun.

Undoubtedly the flask is open. It is placed between the two strange mirrors right above the tongs. Magophon sees it as 'the hermetically sealed flask with its rounding'. Apart from that he says very little when adding that this '*fourteenth plate* is primarily dedicated to instrumentation'. It is true that one can see a mortar and pestle, a spoon for skimming, the scales and the two series of weights placed one within the other. As far as our philosophical point of view on these different elements is concerned, the reader may refer to our comments included with the *tenth plate*.

Regarding the remarkable piece of advice that the alchemist and his wife indicate with their sign of silence, we consider it to be so important that it cannot be repeated often enough:

Pray, read, read, read, read again, work and you will discover.

Let us once more revisit the *Journal des Sçavans* for a perspective that we know originates from the middle of the reign of Louis XIV. It is all the more relevant because it rouses the same sort of curiosity that is associated with our Moon's vegetative quality and the virtues offered by the Tree of Diana. This curiosity is the nascent crystallisation, elegantly appearing in a spagyrical way as a result of the amalgamation of mercury and silver in the nitric acid:

'... the *fourteenth engraving* seems to teach about an artificial and perpetual mine in which gold and silver grow like plants on earth. This is based on the experience that an ounce of silver from a cupel dissolved into spirit of Nitrate grows, within a phial, into a metallic Tree if one adds half a pound of spring water and roughly two ounces of good common Mercury.'

We here find ourselves quite far removed from Jacob Sulat's alchemical allegory. The interpretation of Sulat's allegory would be incomplete without mention of the astounding symbolic reach of his

three athanors. One might not have imaged that they represent the trinity under the aegis of which the *labourer* becomes a *philosopher by fire* — philosophus per ignem. Three fires are used in the Great Work. Artephius expounds upon this by saying, 'without which our art cannot be perfected; and whosoever works without them goes through a great deal of labour in vain.'[125] The first — the noblest — is the *natural fire* which is also the spirit of life hidden within matter. The second is the *secret fire* or the *Lunar Vulcan*, which is enclosed within the adjuvant salt or hyaloid as composed by the alchemist. The third is the *fire contrary to nature* which nourishes, excites and animates the two preceding fires and which produces all combustibles.

Fire of oil, for example, was preferred by the Adept of the *Mutus Liber* and the anonymous alchemist who wrote *Ariadne's Thread*,[126] It has proven to be the ideal source of stable heat, both gentle and moist. It has proven to be the ideal source of stable heat, both gentle and moist, as well as being favourable towards putrefaction. When making thorough and careful comparisons the student will notice, again in our third preface to *The Mystery of the Cathedrals*, what putrefaction means for man at the moment of his death. The dissolution of the body, both slow and necessary, at the very maternal heart of the earth: a dissolution for which SCIENCE, poisoner of the water and of the air, today shows such specious and inexplicable interest!

Commentary to the Fifteenth Plate

This last image, that of the *fifteenth plate*, is the third image that contains regular words in the form of written letters. In this case it comprises the somewhat laconic phrase:

> OCULATUS ABIS — *Thou departest seeing*.

The dream has come true and the ladder of communication with the reputedly unattainable spheres has fulfilled its duty and has been cast aside and is left lying on the ground. In the course of our examination of the previous fourteen engravings, the reader may have developed an idea of the nature of the operative ascent and descent between the sky and the earth on the ladder of Philosophy. This symbolic tool, in the drawing partly hidden by the praying couple, now shows eleven rungs only, instead of the twelve that were left unobstructed by the angels at the beginning. The number twelve is in accordance with the *Treatise Called the Ladder of Philosophers — Tractatus Scala Philosophorum dictus* — in which the final chapter begins like this:

> 'The twelfth and final rung of this Ladder of the Sage and of the Work in its entirety, which completes it and is called Projection — *Duodecimus gradus & ultimus hujus Scalae Sapientis & totius Operis completivus dicitur Projectio*.'

One can immediately appreciate the quality of this work after reading the few lines that we will quote here, taken from just before the part where *the first rung on the Ladder of the Sages starts* — primus gradus Scalae Sapientum incipit:

> 'So our gold is not common gold, for ours is spiritual. It dissolves all imperfect bodies by separating the pure from the impure because nature cannot receive what belongs to its essence otherwise. Yet nature rejects what is opposite to it and this is the sign of its perfection.'[127]

The labours of Hercules, or that of the alchemist, are now completed. The hero is somewhat tired despite his newfound power. At first he seems to have fallen asleep with his now useless club lying next to him. He has fallen asleep upon the remains of the terrifying Nemean lion. On this subject an anonymous author in the *Journal des Sçavans* has expressed a remarkable point in the same year that the *Mutus Liber* was published:

> 'The *fifteenth* and *final plate* seems to show that common Mercury, which previously was as untameable as Hercules, has at last been overcome. After its death the Sun and the Moon are made out of it, in other words the artificial gold and silver of the true hermetic philosophers.'

Indeed, beneath the two alchemical stars to which he gave birth, Heracles has left his body to its agony, seeking a glorious assumption. He does not rejoice in the abandon of the physical that that comes with rest and he touches his suffering forehead with his right hand. This miraculous death was depicted by Ovid in five lines in which the grace and agility of his genius shines:

> 'As it so happens that a renewing snake abounds
> With his old shed skin, and that he glows green with his new scales,
> So, as soon as the hero of Tirynth has cast off his mortal limbs,
> He becomes animated by the better part of himself, he seems bigger,
> And through saintly majesty he seeks to become worthy of worship.'[128]

In short, it is the image of the artist, a new Alcides, who killed the old man in order to attain Adepthood. He and his wife — corresponding with sulphur and mercury — seem to pronounce, together and internally, the adjective and the verb of the short phrase that is twice repeated. The phrase is addressed at the man whose face is covered by his hair and beard and who is raised up and crowned by

two angels. We already encountered these two angels on the title page while they were climbing up and down on the ladder towards the heavens, animating Jacob's dream after it had been initiated by the raw stone:

> *OCULATUS ABIS* — Thou departest seeing.

Thus we recognise the fortunate person whose departure is so miraculous and who is holding a long cord with tassels in his outstretched arms. This cord falls down on either side of him and is held by the protagonists of the *Mutus Liber* who are both kneeling and who we believe find themselves within the unique and glorified *ens*. The elevated Chosen One as well as the beardless agonized one are equally scarcely dressed, pointing to the unpretentiousness of their wisdom. The latter is shown in his youth and thereby relates to the innate knowledge of the *new man*. For these two, we would say it is difficult to accept the statement which Pierre Dujols too hastily may have formulated:

> 'The *fifteenth* and *last plate* represents the apotheosis of Saturn, victorious over his son Jupiter who had dethroned him and who now lies lifeless on the ground.'

It would be a good to take our time to consider the obvious particularity of this *fifteenth engraving*. Contrary to what one would expect as the most logical connection, the moon is here joined with the man and the sun is joined with the woman. What we have to understand from this is that the union of the two natures has been accomplished in its totality. This is symbolised by the man and woman joining hands as well. In addition, it seems that the sun, as it shines from above, has absorbed its celestial companion during this final sublimation, just like in the *second, eighth* and *eleventh plates*. This relates to the exaltation of the spirit. All of this justifies a reading of the Latin on the banderole in the following manner:

> *OCULATUS AB IS* — The seer comes from this.

In alchemy the cabal primarily takes heed of the phonetic meaning and less so of the orthographic. Still, we must take note here of the spelling when it comes to the adjective pronoun in our second reading of the sentence. The plural of the ablative form — here indicating origin — usually *eis* or *iis*, would actually be correctly spelled as *is*, if only in epigraphy.

The new being has been resurrected both in the flesh and in the spirit and now has become an inhabitant of the extra-terrestrial plane. He holds between his thumb and his forefinger — the other fingers are holding the cord — the two flowers, white and red, which he picked and which are the emblems of the Philosopher's Stone.[129] The strong branches of the rose bush that carried these flowers at its base on the first plate, have now been replaced by two branches of an olive tree. The fact that it is indeed an olive tree can be verified by the shape of their leaves and fruits. Manget's drawing must have misled Magophon who concluded, obviously wrongly, that 'he two branches of the Eglantine rose of the frontispiece are now heavy with red and white berries'.

According to legend, once Hercules or the alchemist had accomplished his tasks, he shared with Minerva the glory of having given birth to the olive tree. We also know that this tree is the symbol of wisdom, peace and abundance, which entirely correspond with the three privileges that the Philosopher's Stone bestows upon the artist who receives it. These privileges are: understanding, health and wealth.

The two gigantic branches are bent into a half-circle so as to frame the scene. They are tied together at the bottom so that they form an X. They fan out on either side which thereby symbolises the matter and its volatility, whilst the X signifies the spirit and its fixity. The Greek X (Khi), just like the cross, presents an outline for radiation in its most simplified form. According to Fulcanelli it is a sign of the manifested light, the fire hidden within matter, that very secret little sun which Altus exalts at the top of the image and just below the beaming countenance of its great solitary cosmic brother.

Could it be that the coat of arms placed at the intersection of the

two branches underneath the *knot* which keeps them together belongs to our author, the mysterious and anonymous Adept? Which curious, patient and fortunate heraldist will be able to provide this blazon with a caption of the family name that we failed to discover? In any case, this is the heraldic description as we would word it, notwithstanding the uncertainties in the design:

A sable-coloured field with a silver chevron accompanied by three shells (gauntlets or flames?) above it; two facing the left, one facing right. Below the inverted chevron there are three bezants. These are placed above an escutcheon of wavy gules. Could it be that Jacob Sulat's coat of arms here is an *assumed* and hermetic one and that it *speaks* or that it *sings* like a true coat of arms used to do when its design was a foremost science? Whether they be shells or *Jacob's combs* (pecten jacobaeus), different flames symbolizing the *three fires*, or the gauntlet of arms necessary for the *tour de force*, a pair of which can be found on top of the athanor at Dampierre-sur-Boutonne,[130] these three possibilities could all relate to alchemy, especially seeing as beneath the alembic-like chevron the three bezants are reminiscent of three golden orbs hovering above the troubled waters of the Red Sea.

In closing, projection and transmutation could not have been illustrated in a better way to our eyes as well as to our intellect — *oculis et intellectui* — than by this apotheosis. It compels us to quote that which stands out as the peroration of Magophon's *Hypotyposis*; a closing that is filled with something that is young and yet belongs to ancient alchemy. Although these lines were written more than fifty years ago, no impartial savant of modern physics and chemistry could remain indifferent to them:

> 'It is a gross mistake to believe that a man's soul leaves his body after drawing his last breath. The soul itself is entirely of flesh because the matter is a modality of spirit in a different state. It is subject to a greater and more subtle spark, which is the God of each organism. And if science denies the reality of this spirit because it has never found any trace of it, then it disgraces its name. A corpse, rigid and

cold, is by no means dead in an absolute sense. An intense life continues in the tomb. This life is unconscious and without sense and reflexes, and it is from this horrible short or more prolonged struggle — which is the Purgatory of religions — that the matter, distilled, sublimated, transmuted and vaporized by the action of the Sun, surges up to the amorphous plane. This is a plane that ranges from air to elementary light to the fire principle into which everything eventually dissolves and from which everything emanates anew.'

CONCLUSION

At this writing, we finish our study of the plates in the *Mutus Liber*. It is evening and a time when the moon, on the fourth day of its first quarter, climbs towards its zenith. It happens to be one of these clear nights that we do not see too often. Meanwhile our furnace burns in the back room; a furnace that provides the immediate reassurance to those sons of Hermes who are anxious to extend their quest into the more solid and satisfying field of practical experimentation.

It is within this domain that we are able to confirm that at our latitude, the cosmic activity has lost none of its power. If only providence allows the night sky to open up to the calm and serene atmosphere that henceforth distributes the subtle nitre, we may harvest and preserve this nitre in the way Jacob Sulat, alias Altus, taught us. We have tried our best to elucidate this dual task for those who wish to gain a little knowledge and in particular for those practitioners of science who are not so disdainful to eschew humbly taking up the materials by hand.

As paradoxical as it may seem, we put forward, without reserve, that matter is both the best and the safest means of reaching the domain of the miraculous. With regard to this delicate point we entirety endorse the remark of Pierre Dujols that suggests the hermeticist-bookkeeper did more than simply speculate eruditely. When considering the *spiritus mundi*, the *flos caeli* of the ancient masters, Magophon observed the following on the subject of the *ninth plate*:

> ‘Recent writers have seen in this astral spirit a magnetic emanation of the operator. According to them, one must submit to a physical and moral training for a specific period in order to successfully practice this kind of fakirism or yoga. The strength of the product would be proportional to the power of the fluid in such a way that the powder of projection obtained multiplies 100, 1,000 or 10,000 times,

> etc., according to the potential of the artist. These fantasists claim to charge the matter with astral spirit like one charges a battery with electricity. This is what a poorly understood and randomly applied analogy leads to.'

The same *occultists* declare that the operations described in these books only appear to be of a chemical nature at first glance but that its terms and the expressions bear no relation to the work in the laboratory. They claim that these expressions are only relevant to the work that the alchemist applies to himself. According to them, the artist sublimates his soul, or rather his spirit, by physical asceticism. In their view the body is the athanor and the soul is the matter, both of which are indispensable for the Great Work.

The suggested methods for this inner work are much more diverse but they are nevertheless similar in the link they share with the gravest danger. For there is nothing worse than breaking the equilibrium that exist between physiology and psyche, and between matter and spirit.

There has been so much confusion on this matter, and mentioned danger is so acute for some, That we have oft been requested and continue to be asked, to write a basic book which would explain in simple and clear terms what alchemy comprises.

We do not mean to be disagreeable but it would seem to say that those people have not read the works of Fulcanelli, *Two Alchemical Abodes*[131], *The Twelve Keys of Basil Valentine* and, more recently, our book *Alchemy*[132], which all delve into the nature, the means, and the goal of the ancient science of Hermes. For a thorough understanding, it is important to remember that alchemy is, above all, the ultimate esoteric discipline. At the foundation of this discipline lies a state of mind and of the soul in which disinterest is continuously overcome by the constant desire to love and to understand.

In love with wisdom! That is the appropriate expression so often used by the ancient authors. It designates, most accurately, the philosopher, the alchemist and the artist in particular. Nothing can be accomplished without love, without it being far removed from any form of perfection. Love and Knowledge, one must be permeated by

them. They come as an inseparable duo which presides over the efforts that underlie any real human progression.

That is why the neophyte or the student, whatever his age may be, must return to the benches of another school like Fulcanelli did himself. The student must not deny the responsibilities and the consequences that are an inevitable consequence of the resolute alignment of oneself with the opposite of all that flatters and satisfies greed, hypocrisy and the ignorance of men. Here we shall not venture further into considerations which should only be exposed with great care.

Before resting this case, we shall bring to mind a proclamation that well aligns with the matter. Thus reads the audacious proclamation made by the savant literature historian, Albert-Marie Schmidt, a year before his tragic death that caused us considerable grief:

> *A Parallel Religion: Hermeticism*.

This title introduces a vertiginous exploration, which we took great pleasure in perusing in the weekly magazine *Reform*. It is unfortunate that the man did not reach the conclusion of his argument in those days as his argument seems to venture in the same direction as we have for quite some time. We shall here state our own thoughts on the matter by way of epilogue to the potent images of Altus as conveyed by the imagery of Jacob's dream:

> 'Alchemy predicates ecumenicity, for it is universal and forms the link between science and religions'.

Saginies, the 31st May 1966.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Le Mystère des Cathédrales*. Paris, published by Jean-Jacques Pauvert, p.90.
2. [Editor's note: The *Compagnons du Tour de France* is a French organization of craftsmen and artisans that dates back to the Middle Ages. Their traditional, technical education included taking a tour through France as the apprentice of competent masters.]
3. le Trévisan, *Le Texte d'Alchymie et le Songe-Verd*, Paris, Laurent d'Houry, 1695, p.10.
4. *Ibid.* op. cit., p. 7. The strategy is similar to that which Jean Perréal used, not only to make sure that his anonymity was respected, but also so that the fictitious circumstances of discovery gained an initiatory relevance. Cf. *Les Demeures Philosophales*, Jean-Jacques Pauvert, Paris, third preface, p.46, and, for more details, manuscript 3.220 of the Sainte-Geneviève Library, Paris, Nr. 5.
5. [Editor's note: Since the concession accorded by Louis XIV names Jacob Saulat as the owner of the rights the link with the anagram 'oculatus abis' is tenable. However, the fact that 'oculatus abis' is presented not once but twice across the banners on the *last plate* may have led Canseliet to conclude here that Jacobus Sulat was in fact another pseudonym, discretely preventing the reader from further permutations of the anagram that might lead to the actual name of the author: Isacus Baulot. The latter is a name that had no place in writing anywhere in the book, least of all in the concession of the king. Canseliet states that it is far from certain that Sulat was a last name which underlines that Canseliet's words are to be weighed on a golden scale. Later evidence indeed points to Isacus Baulot as the author of the *Mutus Liber*. J. Flouret presented this evidence in an article titled *À propos de l'auteur du Mutus Liber in Revue franÃ§aise d'histoire du livre*, nº 11, April-June 1976, p. 206-211. The identification was made possible on the basis of a copy of the *Mutus* in the Trinity College Library in Dublin which contains a handwritten note that reads 'Author Isaac Baulot'. The library catalogue includes the Latin note *Authori Nomen est Isâcus Baulot*. This copy was part of a batch of books that had belonged to a Protestant doctor from La Rochelle who most likely fled his homeland after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Further research confirmed that Isaac Baulot had been an apothecary from La Rochelle, born there in 1612 and 65 years of age when he published the *Mutus Liber*]
6. Fulcanellli, *Les Demeures Philosophales*, Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1965, vol. I, p. 108 f. First published in English by Archive Press & Communications, 1999 in one volume as *Dwellings of the Philosophers*.
7. J. Duchêne, *Liber de priscorum philosophorum veræ medicinæ materia*. Geneva, 1609, p. 431: *In sale petræ spiritus — qui est de natura aëris — et qui tamen flâmmam concipere haud possit, sed huic potius contrarius*. *Sal petræ* literally translates as

Saltpetre, which is potassium nitrate.

8 French National Library, lat. 7149, folio 62 Vº: ... usque ad presentem annum et diem quibus fuit compositus iste liber, videlicet incarnationis domini millesimo trescentesimo vicesimo quinto, decimo (ante) kalendas (mensis) mai(as) dicti anni. Nec Non vide ms. 920, of the Library of Cambrai, which reunites the most rare treatises, ff. 21–28: *Incipit Liber Ortholani Philosophi supra Textum Hermetis ...* — Introductory Book of the Philosopher Ortholanus on the Treatise of Hermes ...

9 *Vide in Theatro Chemico*, vol. IV, p. 1028.
In this text Hortulanus also gives accurate instructions on the preparation of of the azotic acid and of Aqua Regia, as well as the preparation of the most aggressive solvents. These solvents were all well known in the middle ages because these liquids enabled a level of control on the quality of precious metals in this remote epoque.

10 *Bibliotheca Alchemica et Chemica*. London, E. Well, 1949, p. 19.

11 This is a good example of posterior modification brought about by use of the ablative in *e* instead of *i*, for *vitrix*, which is an imparisyllabic adjective.

12 Cf. *In Connaissance des Arts nº 108*, the study of this extremely rare ensemble is well-documented thanks to Mr. Marcel Delafosse, Director of the La Rochelle Archives, who was himself very interested with our request and who was greatly helpful to us.

13 *Cf. L. Delayant. Biographie Rochelaise, remains of a manuscript, vol. 358, p. 100. In the present discourse, the notes of this erudite man of the previous century were taken from the Oratory of Louis-Étienne Arcère.*

14 J. Roubier and B. Champignuelle, *Amiens*, Les Editions du Cerf, 1955.

15 M. Carrouges, *Le Sismographe surréaliste, in Polarité du Symbole*, from the *Etudes Carmélitaines*, thirty-ninth year (1960).

16 Fulcanelli, *Le Mystère des Cathédrales*, op. cit., p. 104.

17 *Nunquid enim etiam hæc ars est cabalistica? Arcanis plena? Et tu fatue credis nos docere apertè arcana arcanorum, verbaque accipis secundum sonum verborum? Scito verè — nullo modo sum ego invidus ut cæteri — qui verba aliorum philosophorum accipit secundum prolationem, ac significatonem vulgarem nominum, iam ille absque filo Ariadnæ, in medio amfractuum Labyrinthi multipliciter errat percuniamque suam deestinavit perditioni. Artephii antiquissimi Philosophi de Arte occulta, atque Lapide Philosophorum Liber secretus*, in *Three treatises of Natural Philosophy*, not yet printed. Published in Paris, at Guillaume Marette, Sainct Iacques Street, in Gril, near Sainct Benoist, 1612, p. 29.
In his work, Artephius declares that he reached the age of almost one thousand years thanks to the use of that admirable quintessence — *gratia usu huius mirabilis quintæ essentiæ*.

18 *Liber de Arte chimica incerti Authoris*, Basilæ, 1572.

19 Flamel, *Book of Hieroglyphic Figures*, as encountered on the fourth Arch of the Cemetery of the Innocent in Paris, entering through the Saint Denis archway, on the

right hand side, with an explanation of them by Flamel himself. The writings found there also deal with metallic transmutation — writings that have never been published. Translated from Latin into French by Sir P. Arnauld, a nobleman from Poitou, in *Three treatises of Natural Philosophy*. Not yet printed. Paris, Guillaume Marette, 1622, p. 53.

16 Ibid., p. 53. For an explanation of this symbolic book, see Fulcanelli, *Les Demeures Philosophales*, op. cit., vol. I, p. 323 ff.

17 Ibid., p. 57.

22 E. Arcère, *Histoires de la Ville de la Rochelle et du pays d'Alunis*..., La Rochelle, René-Jacob Desbordes, 1757, vol. II, page 384.

23 (Ioannis) Vogt, *Catalogus historico-criticus librorum rariorum* ..., Hamburg, 1738, p. 481. Our deceased friend Lucien Dorbon entrusted us with one of his 1911 catalogues at a time when his book store was located on Seine Street. In this catalogue he offered the first edition of the 'dogmatic treatise of alchemy' (sic), for the amount of 80 gold francs. It was bound in ancient calfskin and contained a preamble written by the diligent Petrus Savouret. We then copied the end of the explanatory notice which would be a pity not to include here:
'Copy in which a disciple of Hermes, in the XVIIIth century, wrote, on a flyleaf and on the backside of the preface, the explanation of these plates, one of which (sic) represents the way in which to procure a salt which, once purified, concentrated and petrified, becomes a small, artificial sun, as well as a universal solvent.'
Who had purchased it at that time? What has become of this volume? Does it slumber on some library shelf or was it destroyed during one of the two devastating conflicts that were to follow the book's appearance on the market?

24 J. Manget, *Bibliotheca Chemica Curiosa, seu rerum ad Alchimiam pertinentium Thesaurus instructissimus*, Geneva, 1702.

25 Canseliet, *Alchimie*, Paris, Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1964, p. 40-43. Planned publication in English by Inner Garden Press, 2017, as *Alchemy*.

26 J. Manget, *Index Tractatuum et Capitum in Bibliotheca chemica curiosa contentorum*, Ritter & S. de Tournes, 1702.

27 J. Manget, *Hortulus Hermeticus Cum Figuris, Juxta Unius Cujusque Authoris Opinionem*, Frankfurt, 1627.

28 C. Flamand is the author of the text which explains the magnificent illustration of the three volumes dedicated to the pictorial schools of the Renaissance and which recently [1965] was published by Editions Rencontre de Lausanne. It is an ample trilogy that reunites, respectively, the Quattrocento, the Cinquecento, and the pervasive arrival of the Renaissance in France, Flanders, Holland and Germany which would last two ages. Overall it is a goldmine that offers many resources to the untiring efforts of Hermeticists.

29 Read, *Prelude to Chemistry, An Outline of Alchemy: Its Literature and Relationships*, London, G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1937, p. 158. These exact three engravings are preserved at the Saint Salvator and Saint Leonards Colleges, which form part of the

University of Saint Andrews.
[31] Magophon, *Le Livre d'Images sans Paroles*, Paris, Émile Nourry, 1914. First published in English by Inner Garden Press, 2010, as *The Book of Images Without Words*.
[32] [Editor's note: here the author probably alludes to the fact that his teacher Julien Champagne was entrusted to carry out laboratory experiments for Pierre Dujols when Pierre Dujols was struggling with declining health. In that light, the phrase *almost first hand* makes sense since, although the author may not have heard of this directly from Pierre Dujols, he did hear so from his trusted teacher in alchemy — the person who actually carried out certain operations for Pierre Dujols.]
[33] [Editor's note: At the time of publication of this English translation in 2015, it goes for a price of €300 to €900.]
[34] [Editor's note: M. Haven, J.C. Barchusen, J. Saulat (Sieur des Marez), *Treì�sor Hermeì�tique: comprenant le Livre d'images sans paroles (Mutus Liber), ouì€ toutes les opeì�rations de la philosophie hermeì�tique sont deì�crites et repreì�senteì�es, reì�eì�diteì�* avec une introduction par le Dr Marc Haven, et le Traiteì� symbolique de la pierre philosophale, en 78 figures*, Lyon, P. Derain, 1914.]
[35] [Editor's note: ibid. re-edited with a note from P. Servant, Lyon, P. Derain, 1942. First published in English by Inner Garden Press, 2015, as *Hermetic Treasure: The Book of Images without Words (Mutus Liber) and the Symbolic Treatise on the Philosopher's Stone*.]
[36] Read, op. cit., p. 156.
[37] Arcère, op. cit., p. 384.
[38] This is the note that is included in the first Barbier edition (Paris, 1809). The note has disappeared in the 1872 edition as well as in the last edition of 1963 (Hildesheim, vol. IV).
[39] H. Boissat and G. Remeus, *Journal des Voyages*, Lyon, 1665, vol. I, p. 20 f, 29 and 34.
[40] *Intelligite ergo & donum Dei accipite & ab omnibus insipientibus celate. De carvenis metallorum occultis est, qui laips est venerabilis, colore splendidus, mens sublimis, & mare patens. (Septem Tractatus seu Capitula Hermetis Trismegisti, aurei. Argentorati excudebat* Samuel Emmel, 1561, ch. I.)
[41] J. Lallemant, *Le livre d'Heures*, formerly on p. 666, currently on shelf AA 178 (Jh. 87).
[42] *Fulcanelli, Le Mystère des Cathédrales, op. cit., Plate XLV, p. 202.*
[43] P. Lebesque, *Essai d'expansion d'une esthétique*, L'Inspiration, Le Havre, Lyon and Bordeaux, 1911, p. 5.
[44] Fulcanelli, *Les Demeures Philosophales*, op. cit., vol. I, p. 282-286.
[45] [Editor's note: in French this is the word *rosée*.]
[46] E. Canseliet, *Alchimie*, op. cit., p. 40. [Editor's note: Canseliet points out in this work that a backward reading of the code on the title-page of the Mutus will yield references to sections of the *Book of Genesis* and the *Book of Deuteronomy*. Canseliet points out the relevance of the words *rore* and *cœli* as found at the beginning and

end of the last two references. He omits, however, the relevant connection with the first reference.]

45 *Novem Lumen Chymicum e naturæ fonte et manuali experientia depromptum & in duodecim Tractatus divisum, ac iam primùm in Germania editum, cui accessit Dialogus, Mercurii, Alchymistæ & Naturæ, perquàm utilis. Coloniæ, anno M.DC.X*
New Chemical Light taken from the fountain of nature and from manual experience, divided into twelve treatises, previously edited in German, to which is added *The Dialogue of Mercury, of the Alchemist and of Nature*, all extremely useful. Published in Cologne, 1610, p. 76.

46 Fulcanelli, *Discours d'Autheur incertain sur la Pierre des Philosophes, achevé en aoust 1590*. French National Library No. 19957, from the 16th century, print.

47 *Ibi etiam pascebantur tauri & arietes, & pastores erant duo iuvenes, quos alchimista interrogans. On Sulphur, the second principle of Nature — De Sulphure, altero Naturæ principio, Genevæ*, Ioannes de Tournes, 1628. p. 176. On the Saint Firmin Portal at the cathedral in Amiens we see the sign of Gemini depicted in a more alchemical manner by that of a young man and a young woman who look at each other with affection. The right hand of the young woman releases the hand of the young man and she brings her left hand to her virginal belly.

48 Canseliet, *Alchimie*, op. cit., refer to the section on the purifying fire.

49 Mythology, its gods and its heroes; within the religion of Christ, apostles and evangelical verses, can only be convincingly explained by taking into account the undeniable and numerous relationships that they present with alchemy, its materials and its operations. Dom Antoine-Joseph Pernety, Benedictine Monk of the Congregation of Saint-Maur, covers this difficult exegesis in a satisfactory way in two twelvemos that had two successive editions (1758 and 1786) which are now extremely rare. This is the title of the beautiful work which is very much indebted to *Fortuita* by Jacobus Tollius, who was confused by some, as we have already seen, to be the doctor from La Rochelle:
The Egyptian and Greek fables unveiled and reduced to the same principle, with an explanation of the Hieroglyphics and of the War of Troy.
Mythological polytheism allowed alchemical authors to hide the path that led to the Stone much better than that of the linear monotheism of the Christian Revelation and the mystery of the Cross would permit.
This is how the mysterious Latone, hidden and fearful, child of the chaste Diana and the black Virgin (*Virgo paritura* — about to give birth) give way to the white immaculate Virgin.

50 *Dixitque Deus: Fiat Lux. Et facta est lux.*
Et vidit Deus lucem quod esset bona, et divisit lucem à tenebris. Genesis, ch. I, verse 3 and 4.

51 Sethon [also known as The Cosmopolitan], *Novum Lumen Chymicum*, published by M. Sendivogius [the famous student of Sethon who later took on his mentor's title of The Cosmopolitan], op. cit. supra, p. 77: *Præsentem in Hortis Hesperidum*

congratulatur felicitate(m), monstrando mihi speculum, in quo totam Naturam detectam vidi.

[52] Fulcanelli, *Les Demeures Philosophales*, op. cit., p. 33 f.

[53] *Aurora consurgens quæ dicitur aurea Hora* ... which is called the golden Hour. National library. Ms. Latin from the 15th century, print.

We must highlight the philosophical indication of the substance that the *Dolphin* alludes to, through its Greek etymology: Δελψίυ, *Delphin*, designating the cetacean mammal, has the root Δεψύϛ, *Delphus*, which signifies both thee womb and the vulva.

[54] Fulcanelli, *Le Mystère des Cathédrales*, op. cit., p. 197..

[55] *In hac sancta & verissima scientia, in nocturnis versatur tenebris, cui sol non lucet, in densa umbra est cui de nocte non apparet luna*. From Sethon, op. cit. supra. Epilogus seu conclusio horum duodecim tractauum; Epilogue or conclusion of the twelve treatises, p. 54.

[56] Saturno nigro succedit Jupiter, qui diverso colore est. Nam post debitam putredinem & conceptionem factam in vasis fundo, jubente Deo, colores mutabiles ac sublimationem circulantem iterum videbis. Durabile non est hoc regimen, nec ultra tres septimanas durat. Hoc tempore onmes colores imaginabiles apparebunt, de quibus certa nulla ratio reddi potest. Imbres hisce diebus in dies multiplicabuntur, ac tandem post omnia hæc visu pulcherrima albedo instar striarum aut capillorum ad vasis latera ostendit sese. (*Introitus apertus ad occlusum Regis Palatium, caput* XXVI, § I; *Open Entrance to the Closed Palace of the King*, ch. XXVI, § I.)

[57] *Tum gaude, quia Jovis regimen feliciter peregisti. Cautio in hoc regimine maxima esto. Ne corvorum pulli, postquam nidumn suum reliquerint, eumden repetant.*
Item, ne sic immodicè aquam exhaurias, ne cadem terra subsidens careat, & arida inutilisque in fundo relinquatur.
Tertio ne intemperanter adeo terram tuam irriges, ut eamden penitus suffoces. Quibus erroribus cunctis bonum caloris externi regimen succuret. From *Philalethæ Introitus*, op. cit., ch. XXVI, § II.)

[58] Cf. Canseliet, Alchimie, op. cit., p. 25.

[59] Fulcanelli, Les Demeures Philosophales, op. cit., vol. I, p. 198.

[60] The *épervier*, like the eagle, was once a noble bird of which the two lower limbs, like those of a horse, are still called legs and feet. It was also the attribute of ladies of standing. [Translator's note: the double meaning of *épervier* is lost in translation as the French has two meanings that translate to two separate English words, namely *casting net* and *sparrowhawk*. Furthermore, the idea of legs and feet of a horse does not translate, as horse's feet are called hooves in English, which does not apply to a bird.]

[61] Fulcanelli, *Les Demeures Philosophales*, op. cit., vol. II, p, 205.

[62] Ibid., vol. I, p. 194.

At the Museum of Arts and Crafts of Winterthur in the canton of Zurich, there are

sixteen small scenes which date back to the year 1702 and which decorate the alchemic stove of *Pfau* (Peacock). The tenth shows a man standing at the edge of the water wearing a three-cornered hat on his head and peacefully fishing with a line. The series of images on coloured earthenware opens with that of a young woman dressed in an ancient style dress who is holding against her left breast a *black ball* and who, with great disdain, tramples a golden crown with her right foot. In this young woman we recognize the alchemy that prefers primordial chaos above humble and celestial royalty. She can be recognized as such by the golden and brilliant emblem of power and mundane decorations of honour.

Jean-Jacques-Manget places a cross on top of this *globe*, before adding it to the tip of the turret we see on the right, on the middle circular band of his *third engraving*. In this way he presents, with the greatest discretion, a sign of genuine knowledge because the *cruciferous globe* [orb and cross] remains the symbol of the *subject of the wise* or of *philosophic Saturn* which is attributed to the operations of the *dry way* for all eternity.

Likewise, Christina, *Queen* of Sweden and passionate about alchemy, half a century earlier, showed her disdain for earthly royalty. She had a medallion with her effigy minted, the back of which showed a royal crown accompanied by the sentence: *ET SINE TE – And without you*. (Stockholm, Kungliga Myntkabinettet.)

64 W.C. Wells, *Essay on Dew*, London, 1814. [Canseliet refers to the French version with the title *Essai sur la Rosée* which was translated by A. J. Tordeux, Master of Pharmacy. Paris, 1817, p. 24.]

65 Ibid., p. 24.

The order of manipulations is quite prosaically reported as work that was carried out in a rural area around Winterthur in the same year that Jean-Jaques Manget compiled his *Curious Chemical Library*. In short, it paints the picture of a labourer who works the land with two horses and a plough.

66 Fulcanelli, *Le Mystère es Cathédrales*, op. cit., p. 170 f.

67 Ibid., p. 170.

68 [Translator's note: The author refers to *fer* (iron) and *vert* (green), the pronunciation of which is almost identical. This explains the reference to a qabalistic association.]

69 *Tractate aquas vestras pluviales, majales, salia vestra, … creditis me hoc vestro turpiloquio tristitiâ affici!* From *Introitus*, op. cit., ch. XII, § XXVII.

70 *Quemadmodum Chalybs ad Magnetem trahitur, Magnesque sponte se ad Chalybem convertit, sic & Magnes Sophorum trahit illorum Chalybem*.

Ibid., ch. IV, § I.

71 Here it would be fitting to cite a few words from The Cosmopolitan who, as previously mentioned, greatly inspired the precious iconography of Altus. His words may serve here as advice to the experimenter:

'In fact, you must first take that which is, but can't be seen, as pleases the artist; that is the water of our dew, from which the Salpetre of the Philosophers is taken, through which all things grow and are nourished.'

Id enim accipere debes, quod est, sed non videtur, donec artifici placeat, est aqua roris nostri, ex qua extrahitur sal petræ Philosophorum, quo omnes res crescunt, & nutriuntur. (in Epiolgo citato supra.)

71 *Introitus apertus ad Palatium occlusum Regis*, ch. XIX, § 21: *At est via mille spinis obsita, & nos vovimus Deo & æquitati, quod nudis verbis nunquam declarabimus regimen utrumque distinctim.*

72 *The Hermetic Triumph: or, The victorious Philosopher's Stone*. Amsterdam, Henry Wetstein, 1689.

73 *The Hermetic Triumph*, 1710 (2nd edition), p.42.

74 *Cave tu saltem igni, quem sano cum judicio hic regere teneris, & juro tibi sub fide bona, quod si urgendo ignem in hoc regimine quicquam sublimare feceris, opus totum irrecuperabiliter perdes. Contentus proinde esto, cum Trevisano bono in carcere, per dies noctesque quadraginta detineri ac teneram materiam in fundo, qui nidus est conceptionis* ... From *Introitus*, op. cit., ch. XXV, § 111.

75 The wonderful *Mutus Liber* that was printed on vellum and which is kept at the French National Library shows a small difference from the version in La Rochelle. One central point is added to the flower which thereby makes this flower the symbol for gold and which thus completes the circular stamen of our philosophical flower. We discovered on Rue de Richelieu that this point is also present on the four corollas from the tenth plate. It may have been added a long time ago, by the hand of some knowledgeable and charitable reader or owner.

76 Fulcanelli, *Les Demeures Philosophales*, op. cit., vol. II, p.141.

77 Ibid., p.129.

78 *Sales & alumnia non sunt lapis sed adiutores lapidis. Qui non gustaverit saporem salium nunquam veniet ad optatum Fermentum fermenti, fermentat etenim finitum per excellentiam.*
Tale superius quale inferius.
Combure in aqua, lava in igne.
Coque & recoque, & iterum coque.
Saepissime humare & semper coagulare.
Interfice vivum & resuscita mortuum.
Et hoc spetena vice. Et habebis vere quod quæris, si scis regimen ignis. Sufficit tibi Mercurius & ignis.
(From *Rosarium Philosophorum, Francoforti ex officina Cyriaci Iacobi, mense Iunio, anno 1556*; in Frankfurt at Jacob Cyriac's workshop, in the month of June, in the year 1556, p.171.)

79 *Nota, omne sal bene præparatum, redit ad naturam salis armoniaci, & totum secretum est in sale comuni præparato.*
Qui ergo scit salem & eius solutionem, ille scit secretum occultum Antiquorum Sapientum. Pone ergo mentem tuam super salem nec cogites de aliis. (From *Rosarium Philosophorum*, op. cit., p.45.)

80 *Introitus*, op. cit., ch. X, § IX: *Quare instar Magnetis ad se hoc trahit, & in suo ventre*

absorbet ac abscondit.

81 *Antimonium est de partibus Saturni, & in omnibus modis habet naturam eius, & antimonium Saturninum convenit Soli, & in eo est argentum vivum in quo non submergitur aliquod metallum nisi aurum*. (From Artephius' *Antiquissimi philosophi Liber secretus*, op. cit.)

82 Fulcanelli, *Le Mystère des Cathédrales*, op. cit., p.174.

83 [Editor's note: Jean d'Espagnet had been President of the Parliament of Bordeaux for some time, hence the designation of President.]

84 *Duobus perficitur philosophica Mercurii sublimatio, superflua ab eo removendo, & deficientia introducendo: superflua sunt externa accidentia, quæ fuscâ Saturni sphærâ rutilantem Iovem obnubilant: Emergentem ergo Saturni livorem separa, donec purpureum Iovis sydus tibi arrideat*. (From *Arcanum hermeticae Philosophiae Opus — The Secret Work of Hermetic Philosophy*, Paris, 1638, canon LI.)

85 Cf. Fulcanelli, *Le Mystère es Cathédrales and Les Demeures Philosophales*, op. cit. passim. According to Martinus Rulandus, prepared mercury is called Alkahest that some wish to be tartar — *Alchahest Mercurius dicitur præparatus nonnulli volunt esse tartarum* (M. Rulandus, *Lexicon Alchemiæ*, 1612.)

86 (Ioannis) Kunckelii, *Laboratorio Chimico*, Hamburg, 1722, *in sermone germno* — in German.

87 H. Pott, *Dissertations Chymiques*, translated as much from the Latin as from the German by Demachy, Paris, 1759, vol. II, p.229.

88 *Scias, Frater, quod exacta Aquiliarum Philosophorum præparatio primus perfectionis gradus censetur, in quo cognoscendo ingenium requiritur habile. Ubi vero loquuntur Magi de Aquilis suis, plurali numero loquuntur, numeroque assignant à tribus usque ad decem.* (*Introitus*, op. cit., ch. VII: *De Operatione Prima Mercurii Sophici Præparationis, per Aquilas Volantes*; On the First Operation in the Preparation of the Mercury of the Sages, by Use of the Flying Eagles.

89 *Hic tamen de furno vere secreto intellegi debet, quem oculus vulgaris vidit nunquam*. (*Eirenæus Philalethes, Introitus ad Regis Palatium*, op. cit., ch. XVIII, § VIII.)

90 'A very curious explanation for the enigmas and hieroglyphic and physical figures which are on the grand gate of the Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris,' (W. Salmon, *The Chemical Philosophers' Library*, Paris, André-Charles Cailleau, 1754, vol. IV, part. II, p.382.)

91 Χρυσοποιη, *The Art of Making Gold*.

92 *Et pluit illis manna ad manducandum, & panem cœli dedit eis. Panem Angelorum manducavit homo: cibaria misit eis in abundantia*, psalm LXXVII, 24 and 25.

93 *Manè quoque ros jacuit per circultum castrorum, Cùmque operuisset superficiem terræ, appartuit in solitudine minutum, & quasi pilot usum in similitudinem pruinæ super terram* (*Exodus*, ch. XVI, 13 and 14).

94 *Cùmque descenderet nocte super castra ros, descendebat pariter & man*. From *The Book of Numbers*, ch. XI, 9.

95. *Œuvres tant médicinales que chymiques*, 2nd edition to which the *Aphorisms* of Basil Valentine were added. Paris, Jean d'Houry, 1661, canon XVI.

96. Sethon, op. cit., p.78: *Unica res est, cui non misceatur aliquid aliud, præterquam Aqua philosophica tibi in somno aliquoties manifestata, quæ in decuplo esse debet ad unam corporis partem.*

97. *Vas, quo opus suum decoquunt philosophi, duplicis generi est, unum Naturæ, alterum artis: Vas Naturæ, qui etiam vas pihlosophiæ dicitur, est terra lapidis, sive femella, sive etiam matrix, in quâ semen masculi recipitur, putrefit, & ad generationem præparatur: vas autem artis triplex est; in triplici enim vase coquitur arcanum.*
From *Arcanum Hermeticae Philosophiae Opus — The Secret Work of Hermetic Philosophy*, Paris, 1623.
Lenglet-Dufresnoy suggests, without proof and probably wrongly, that this little treatise was not written by President d'Espagnet but rather by an Adept known only as the Imperial Knight.

98. Fulcanelli, *Le Mystère es Cathédrales*, op. cit., p.206.

99. The investigator will regularly find this image of the target in iconography; for example, on the alchemist-monk from Erfurt's eighth key or the ninth figure of Solomon Trismosin's *The Golden Fleece*. The latter, falsely identified in the Parisian edition (1612) as Paracelsus' private tutor, places the symbolic disk in the right hand of the androgynous person dressed in black and bearing wings.
The alchemical stove of Pfau, in Winterthur, shows an allegory similar to the one given by Basile Valentine. The gentleman who is seated rather comfortably before the target that is to be struck is busy drawing his crossbow with the help of a doe's hoof. A second figure, not far from the first, is bending a kind of sapling so as to verify the flexibility necessary for the bow that he wishes to make.

100. *Tractatus Opus Mulierum et Ludus Puerorum dictus, in Artis auriferæ volumine secundo — Treatise called Women's Work and Child's Play, in the second volume of The Auriferous Art*, 1610, p.115 — *Cognosce modum sive gradum vasis nostril operis, quod vas est radix, & principium nostril magisterii. Et idem vas est tanquam matrix in animalibus.*

101. de Cyrano de Bergerac, *The States and Empires of the Sun*, Paris, Charles de Sercy, 1662.

102. Fulcanelli, *Les Demeures Philosophales*, vol. II, p.220.
How impressive and unique in this sense is that stout man, without a mustache but with a large hanging beard, who represented Mercury in Christine of Sweden's cabinet! His inquisitive look rests upon *The Creation*; in other words, the second part that went with it at one time in order to decorate an astronomical clock.
Instead of the genitals that one would expect on the basis of his stature, the god exposes a plump woman's pubis which is covered up by delicate feathers spreading like down from the belly button. The same ornamental and protective covering is shown from the kidneys down over the buttocks around which hovers a dragonfly; that insect whose love offers the most surprising particularities. This oil painting on

wood by Hans Baldung Grien presents a complicated scene in which Mercury is wearing Mars' helmet, whose two ear guards form wings when turned up. Mercury holds in his left hand a caduceus with a long shaft. For our purposes, the most interesting thing is that which he grips in his right hand, in such a way that we can see the flattened orifice and which one can identify with the secret vase of the dry way. Right next to Jupiter's son is a lion which is a symbol of sulphur, who beholds his image as reflected in a puddle. This is representative of mercury or of the *Mirror of Sages*, if you will.
(This painting can be viewed at the National Museum of Stockholm. Inv. Nº 1073)

102 Dante Alighieri, *Del Paradiso, Foligno, Johann Numeister and Evangelista Angelini da Trevi*, 1472, canto XXI, 13.

103 Ibid., 16-18.

Ficca dirietro agli occhi tuoi la mente,
E fa di quegli specchio all figura,
Che in questo specchio ti sarà parvente.

104 E. Canseliet, *Les Douze Clefs de la Philosophie, Translation, introduction, notes and explication of the images by Eugène Canseliet*, Minuit, 1956, p.46

105 Fulcanelli, *Les Demeures Philosophales*, op. cit., vol. II, p.55.

106 Piccolpassi, op. cit. infra.

107 N. Lémery, *Cours de Chymie. Paris, Jean-Thomas Herissant*, 1756.

108 *Est furnus quem communem appellamus, qui est noster Henricus lentus, qui aut lateritius, aut ex luto figuli erit conflatus,... Hunc furnum Athanor appellamus, cujus forma mihi magis arridet, turris cum nido*. (From Philalethes' *Introitus*, op. cit., ch. XVIII, § IX.)

109 [Translator's note: this comment comes from the French for primrose: *primevère* and the similarity with the words *vert*, meaning green, and *verre*, meaning glass.]

110 *Hermæ Trismegisti Smaragdina Tabula: Verum est sine mendacio, certum, & verissimum. Quod est inferius, est sicut id quod est superius. Et quod est superius, est sicut id quod est inferius, ad perpetranda miracula rei unius.*
The Latin text of this classic treatise, both the shortest and the most venerated of the alchemical collection, can be found at the bottom of the magnificent engraving by Janitor Pansophus which we have included on page 185 of our book *Alchimie*, op. cit.

111 In an ancient epigram, Jan Gruter mentions that Diana is the Queen of waves — *Diana Regina undarum*. The Moon becomes their goddess according to Jacques Tolle who provides us with the following interesting confirmation: 'Which is why, during the full moon, when the planet has offered itself entirely to the Sun, and during the equinoctial hours, in other words during the coitus of the moon and the sun, the bubbling is usual and is much stronger than at other times, ... — *Hinc in plenilunio, cum tota Soli objecta Luna est, ut & sub horis æquinoctii, id est sub ipsum solis lunæque soitum, æstus muto solet esse maximus, ...*' (From *Les Choses Fortuites*, p.77.)

112 Piccolpassi, *Les Trois Livres de l'Art du Potier*, translated from Italian to French by Master Claudius Popelin. Paris, 1861, p.81.

Récréations Hermétiques, in Traductions, in fine, library of the Museum of Paris, nº 362.

[114] *Quia verissimus sol per artem procreatur. Et dicit verissimum in superlativo gradu, quia sol generatus per hanc artem, excedit omnem solem naturalem, in omnibus proprietatibus medicinalibus & aliis.*
(Hortulani Philosophi ab Hortis maritimis, Commentariolus in Tabulam smaragdinam Hermetis Trismegisti — A brief Commentary of Hortulanus the Philosopher, upon the Smaragdine Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus, written by the Philosopher Gardener of the Maritime Gardens. (National Library, Latin manuscript from the 15th century, nº 11.201, fol. 89 vº.)

[115] *Ipsius ut tenui projecta parte per undas*
Æquoris, argentum si vivum tum foret æquor,
Omne vel immensum verti mare possit in aurum.
(Ioannis Aurelii Augurelii Chrysopœiæ Liber Tertius, in Theatri Chemici volumine tertio, Argentorati, p.244. — the third book of Jean-Aurélien Augurelle's *Chrysopoeia*, in the third volume of *Theatrum Chymicum*, Strasbourg, 1602.)

[116] G. Salmon, *Dictionnaire*, Paris, Laurent d'Houry, rue Saint Jacques, in front of the Saint Severin Fountain at Saint Esprit, 1695, p.128.

[117] [Dom] Pernety, *Dictionnaire Mytho-Hermétique*, Paris, Bauche, 1758.

[118] *Qui liber antiquus, fuit quondam Caroli quarti Romanorum Imperatoris, ex quo etiam laborare fecit lapidem nostrum, & perfectissime adimplevit. Qui etiam multa monsateria diversorum ordinum multasque egregias collegiatas Ecclesias & cathedrales erexit & fundavit, &c.*

[119] *Debet autem triplex ludus puerorum pr'cedere opus mulierum. Pueri enim ludunt in tribus rebus. Primò cum muris frequenter vetustissimis. Secundò cum urina. Tertio cum carbonibus.*

[120] *Primus ludus materiam lapidis ministrat. Secundus ludus animam augmentat. Tertius ludus corpus ad vitam pr'parat.*

[121] *In volumine secundo Artis auriferae quam Chemiam vocant*, Basilae, 1610, p.111 et 112.

[122] Fulcanelli, *Les Demeures Philosophales*, op. cit., vol. I, p.280.

[123] Ibid., p.178.

[124] *Sine quibus ars non perficitur, & qui absque illis laborat in vanum curas suscipit*, from Artephius' *Liber Secretus*, op. cit.

[125] *Fil d'Ariadne: pour entrer avec securité dans le Labirinthe de la Philosophie Hermetique* [in order to enter safely into the Labyrinth of Hermetic Philosophy], Paris, Laurent d'Houry, rue S. Jacques, 1695.

[126] *Sic aurum nostrum non est aurum vulgi, quoniam nostrum est spirituale: quia dissolvit omnia corpora imperfecta, separando purum ab impuro: quoniam natura non recipit nisi quod suæ naturæ est: alienum vero respuit, quod signum perfectionis eius est*, from *De Alchimia opusculis compluribus …*, Frankfurt, 1550.

[127] *Utque novus serpens posita cum pelle senecta*

Luxuriare solet, squamaque virere recenti,
Sic, ubi mortales Tirynthius exuit artus,
Parte sui meliore viget, majorque videri
Cœpit et augusta fieri gravitate verendus.
From *Metamorphosium Liber Nonus — The Ninth Book of the Metamorphoses*.
There are various fine translations, but they are often either too literal or in part the result of a poetic license that undermines their esoteric meaning. We have already said how much 'plasticity' the French language offers in its translation from Latin. The Latinist will readily acknowledge this remark.

[129] These are the two corollas which the alchemist placed at the end of his long work on the bottom of the last key by the famous monk of Erfurt.The red is placed above the sun and the white above the moon. Together they come out of a Hesse crucible (*The Twelve Keys of Philosophy*, Basil Valentine, op. cit.)

[130] Fulcanelli, *Les Demeures Philosophales*. op. cit., p.128.

[131] Canseliet, *Deux Logis Alchimiques*, Paris, J. Schemit, 1945. Planned publication in English by Inner Garden Press, 2016, as *Two Alchemical Abodes*.

[132] Canseliet, *Alchimie*, Paris, Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1964. Planned publication in English by Inner Garden Press, 2017, as *Alchemy*.

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